

**EXPLORING ORGANISATIONAL USE OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS ON
FACEBOOK AND THEIR EFFECT ON BRAND PERCEPTIONS**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of negative emotions on Facebook by organisations, with the main purpose being to discover how consumers perceive the content. Research in the past has focused on advertising, with little attempt made to understand the response to negative emotions on social media. This study used a multi-method qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm. First, five online observations were made from real companies on Facebook, finding what sort of reaction these type of emotions evoked. Next were sixteen 1-to-1 interviews where participants viewed mock Facebook pages, one containing posts with negative emotions and one containing solely positive posts. The findings show the consumer has complex and varied reactions to negative emotions on social media. Often, they see benefits such as the posts grabbing their attention and creating an emotional connection. But they also react negatively - not wanting to see the post on their own Facebook newsfeed. There was also a general mistrust of marketing - participants expected companies to use unethical marketing techniques. The study concludes that using negative emotions on Facebook can have some benefits, with these however being greatly outweighed by the potential to leave consumers with a negative perception of the brand.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The use of social media has been growing rapidly over the last ten years, with 79% of American adult internet users using Facebook (Greenwood, Perrin and Duggan, 2017), compared to 7% in 2005 (Perrin, 2015). Facebook now has over 2.01 billion monthly users worldwide, with 1.32 billion daily users on average in June 2017 (Newsroom.fb.com, 2017). This shows how much of a tool social media has become in the day to day life of a lot of people, at least in areas with internet access. In 2016 over half of UK residents, 33.2 million, used Facebook at least once a month (Emarketer.com, 2017). This number is forecast to increase to over 35 million by 2020, with even more of the UK population using Facebook on a regular basis. With this widespread use of Facebook, businesses have been quick to utilise this platform with over 60 million having their own Facebook page (Yeung, 2016) in order to connect with customers. It's not hard to see why either, with 32% of users engaging with brands on Facebook (Selfstartr, 2017). Having a Facebook presence is important for businesses, both large and small, in order to connect with their consumers and market their product on this ever-growing platform. From this increased use, multiple ways of connecting with consumers have arisen, with the one being most intriguing for this study is when companies use negative emotions to connect with consumers on Facebook. This study focuses on Facebook rather than a broad spectrum of social media sites. This is due to it being by far the largest social media site in the world (World Economic Forum, 2017) and to remove factors such as differences between social media sites having an influence.

This research arose from my own experiences of viewing posts that included negative emotions on social media and the complex reactions I had towards them and the brand that posted them. Upon further research, there were academic articles into this area from Cauberghe et al (2009), Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) and Parry et al (2013). They looked at advertising messages, usually in the form of TV adverts or printed media, and looked at the varying impacts that negative appeals had on the consumer. Whilst insightful and varied in their results, none of these looked at social media marketing and how the unique nature of the platform had an impact on consumers' responses. This intrigued me and led to this study being formed to fill a gap in the literature. It explores how negative emotions are perceived on Facebook, exploring consumers' perceptions of them and what impact they have on their view of the brand. This leads to the research question:

“How do consumers perceive organisational use of negative emotion on social media and what, if any, impact does this have on their perceptions of the brand?”

The research question focuses on determining and understanding consumers' perceptions, gaining an insight into why consumers feel the way they do and what is behind their thought processes. This the idea of looking at consumers *perceptions* of the brand and the use of negative emotions is where this study contributes to the literature. Previous studies by Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) and Cauberghe et al (2009) have looked at the *outcomes*, what consumers' behaviour changes were and the visible actions the participants might make. This study will focus more on how consumers process the use of negative emotions. Social media is

another important element here, these studies have explored negative emotions from an advertising view point where the interaction between brands and consumers is quite passive. Social media on the other hand allows for two-way interactions where consumers can report back immediately what they think to a brand (Burrows, 2010). Exploring this distinction and how users interpret negative emotions on social media in particular will be key.

The thesis is structured with Chapter 1 introducing the study, looking at the background of the study and rationale behind it. Chapter 2 will explore the previous research into the area in more depth, giving me a good understanding of previous studies and how these have contributed to the area. The first area that will be looked at is the role social media plays in marketing and how consumers use the platform. From the research, similar characteristics are identified by the different studies that look to create a typology of social media users. Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashitta, (2015), Vinerean et al (2013), and Brandtzæg & Heim (2011) all looked at the different types of users on social media, finding similar results that are identified in the literature review. Once these types of social media users are identified I will look at the link between the brand and social media, including how interacting with brands have an impact on consumers attitudes (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2014). Next the chapter identifies negative emotions in marketing and clarify what these actually are. Laros and Steenkamp (2005) identify these as anger, fear, sadness, and shame. This study then moves on to looking at how these negative emotions have been used in marketing in past, with a large body of research into these negative marketing appeals being used in both for-profit and not-for-profit marketing. Gender

differences will also be looked at, examining if the genders reacted differently to these types of marketing messages.

During the literature review the complexity of how people consume negative emotions will also be explored, with there being positive outcomes when negative emotions are consumed (Andrade and Cohen, 2007; Goldsmith, Cho and Dhar, 2012). Next the emotional connections people have on social media will be explored. The impact of tie strength is of particular interest, with studies by Lin and Utz (2015) as well as Shen et al (2016) looking at the role of this in marketing as well as on social media. Finally, the literature review looks at consumers' opinion of marketing, seeing distrust from consumers into the value and honesty of marketing (Heath and Chatzidakis, 2012). There is however an optimistic note with consumers identifying that there is potential for marketing to have a positive impact on society.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, exploring what research methods will be used and why. This study will be qualitative in nature, following an interpretive paradigm. Interpretive research sees reality as subjective, meaning that everyone sees their world through their own lens in a unique way (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of the how and why, the meaning behind the words that are collected (Carson et al, 2001). This will be vital for this research in order build a basis for how negative emotions are received by consumers. This study uses two qualitative research methods, online observations and interviews. Online observations are used to find real examples of when negative emotions are used on social media. This shows the reactions by real people,

including the comments that they post on these pages and the number of “likes”.

After this data is gathered interviews will be undertaken in order to delve deeper into consumers reactions, the comments and “likes” are the outcomes whilst interviews look at the thought processes. Interviews will allow for an exploration into what people think, even when they don’t necessarily interact with a post on Facebook

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research. First the findings will highlight the different types of Facebook users found and the impact they have on the findings. Next the number of “reactions”, “shares” and comments were looked at next, exploring in more depth the interactions people had with the posts observed. Next the immediate and emotional reactions of participants are explored. The following section looks at consumer outcomes and lasting opinions of the brand. This is the natural step from the previous section, looking at what consumers think of the brand after viewing the negative posts and whether it would change if they buy from the company or not. Next the findings will look at the *complexity of emotion* and how they are not simply good or bad. Finally, there will be *contempt for marketing* where participants had low expectations of marketing.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion, which recaps what was found in the study. The research objectives are examined in detail to determine if this study achieves what it set out to find. Managerial implications will also be identified, highlighting how the findings effect how companies should communicate with consumers on social media. Also, what consumers like to see on social media as well as the role of marketing in society will be discussed. Finally, the limitations of this study and the future research

opportunities are explored.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 - Introduction

This chapter reviews literature regarding social media marketing, negative emotions within marketing, social media and emotional connections, and consumer's attitudes towards marketing in general. Research has looked in general at social media's place within marketing, at how it has been and could be used as a marketing tool by companies (Whiting and Deshpande, 2016; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). This review focuses specifically on how users use social media (Vinerean et al, 2013; Brandtzæg and Heim, 2011; Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015) and the impact social media marketing has on a company's brand. These areas will be key going forward as they give a grounding in why social media users react the way they do and what consumers think of brands on social media. This review will then continue to look at how emotions have traditionally been used in marketing, with a specific focus on the use of negative emotions for both social and commercial marketing purposes. There is a wide body of research into the use of negative emotions in both social marketing (Brennan and Binney, 2010; Antonetti, Baines and Walker, 2015; Dillard and Peck, 2000) and commercial marketing (Parry et al, 2013; Urwin, 2014; Roozen, 2013), although very little of this has focused on social media specifically. Next, this review looks at how emotion has an impact on social media emotional connections and engagement (Hudson et al, 2015, Lin and Utz, 2015), with a focus on how emotion plays out within a social media context. Finally, I investigate consumers opinions of marketing in general and at how there is a "mistrust" amongst

consumers (Heath and Heath, 2008; Heath and Chatzidakis, 2012).

2.2 – Social Media in Marketing

In recent years, there has been a substantial interest in social media marketing with a growing body of work exploring the best way to communicate with customers on this medium (Whiting and Deshpande, 2016). Indeed, great strides have been made to try and understand social media's place within the marketing mix, with Mangold and Faulds (2009) highlighting how social media is a unique communication channel. Marketers lack control due to consumer's ability to talk to both the company and each other in an open space. The shift in control of information from marketers to consumers has a big impact on marketing communications. When this article was published in 2009 academia was only beginning to understand social media's role in marketing, with a multitude of research since then looking at many different aspects of social media marketing. Exploring how consumers use social media can help me understand how brands communicate and the best methods to go about this. Also, looking at the impact of social media on the brand and the unique insights this gives us will be important.

2.2.1 - How Consumers Use Social Media

Multiple studies have looked at the way consumers use social media, segmenting them into different types of social media users (Vinerean et al, 2013; Brandtzæg and Heim ,2011; Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015). Li and Bernoff (2011) explored what participation levels users have on social networking sites,

finding that it ranged from creators who are responsible for creating content to those who are inactive. How users participate on the platform is an important consideration when using social media as a marketing tool and communication channel, it can have an impact on the way social media posts are received and interacted with. The following studies explore how different users interact on social media and the impact of this on marketing. They each propose different methods of classifying types of social media users, all three articles propose similar classifications so looking at them separately to begin with helps define their unique features.

Vinerean et al (2013) looks at the effects of social media marketing on online consumer behaviour, chiefly at the different types of behavioural patterns that emerge and what makes these users different from each other. Exploring how students engage with social media allowed the researchers to determine different types of user who interact with social media. The researchers use online surveys with a sample of university students. This makes the results quite focused to university students, although this is a commonly used group used by researchers due to the ease of access. The data collected was quantitative, with the data analysed using a variety of methods such as a factor analysis, a cluster analysis and an automatic linear modelling (ALM) analysis. Ultimately four types of user identified are:

Expressers and Informers, Watchers and Listeners, Networkers, and Engagers.

Brandtzæg and Heim (2011) also look at how people used social network sites (SNS), proposing a typology for different user types. They found 5 distinct types of users; Sporadic, Lurkers, Socialisers, Debaters and Actives. The level of interaction with SNSs increases from the least (sporadic) through to the most active (actives).

These studies share similarities in that they look at the activities of social media users. An important distinction is that whilst Brandtzæg and Heim (2011) look at the use of social media in general, while Vinerean et al (2013) focus on consumers' actions in reaction to social media marketing. Interestingly, whilst they both find similar types of users, despite some minor differences, with groups such as Engagers and Actives. With the focus of Vinerean et al (2013) on social media use in response to marketing this makes this study very relevant for marketers, showing that consumers react differently to the same social media posts.

An important element of Brandtzæg and Heim's (2011) study that should be addressed is how as the use of social media has increased, users are becoming much more active. In comparison to previous studies which found that 90% were lurkers, 9% were intermittent contributors and 1% were heavy contributors, Brandtzæg and Heim (2011) propose that 50% are sporadics or lurkers, 30% socialisers and debaters and 20% are actives. Whilst this study does highlight how SNS's are used it can be argued that it is restricted to Norway, mainly due to the fact the SNS's used were solely used by Norwegians rather than a multinational site. Not using popular SNS's internationally such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram limits how generalizable these findings can be. The authors highlight themselves that Norwegians are heavy SNS users, meaning the same type of usage and engagement may not be found in countries such as the UK.

One study that builds on both Brandtzæg and Heim (2011) and Vinerean et al (2013) by looking from a marketing perspective at the different types of users on Facebook

is Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal (2015). This study highlights how marketing is failing to engage with consumers on Facebook, often simply using it as a tool to get adverts seen by as many people as possible. These targeted adverts are viewed as intrusive and unwelcome, highlighting how simply launching adverts at consumers on Facebook would not necessarily be successful. Using focus groups and qualitative surveys this study identified four different user segments.

Entertainment Chasers are those that use Facebook for entertainment purposes, not really posting or commenting on posts. *Attention Seekers* create a lot of content, posting updates often but are unlikely to view others' pages out of boredom.

Devotees have a very high level of involvement on Facebook, both interacting with others and creating content. These types of users feel Facebook is an important part of their lives, being able to immerse themselves in Facebook amongst Facebook friends is a big appeal. *Connection Seekers* are motivated to connect with others, spending most of their time interacting with others rather than creating content. The authors highlight the importance of these different types of users in regards to social media marketing strategies. *Attention seekers* and *Devotees* are ones that are likely to interact with the brand, being content creators and if empowered effectively being excellent brand ambassadors. *Entertainment Chasers* and *Connection Seekers* on the other hand are not going to be interested in creating content, they need to have a reason to view a page or interact with it. For *Entertainment Chasers* this might mean quizzes, interesting videos, contests or polls that are easy to access and not very time consuming. *Connection Seekers* will want to connect and 'hang out', meaning that brand orientated groups are effective. Further research needs to take place in order to identify whether these groups present themselves on a greater scale.

The studies highlighted above (Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015; Vinerean et al, 2013; Brandtzæg & Heim ,2011) show that there is a common theme amongst studies that try to segment social media users. They all find similar results, with groups that bear a strong resemblance to one another. Table 2.1 identifies the different studies found to look at types of social media users. According to this, the levels of information consumption and information creation are key indicators that determine different types of users. Information consumption is defined by activities such as browsing and liking posts and pictures, whilst Information creation involves creating status updates or posting pictures (Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015). Using the varying levels of consumption and creation as a measure we can see the similarities between studies and how the groups share similar characteristics. For example, *Lurkers* found by Brandtzæg & Heim (2011) are very similar to *Entertainment Chasers* identified by Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal (2015) and *Watchers and Listeners* by Vinerean et al (2013). They have both low levels of consumption and creation, meaning that users that fall into this category often just browse social media when they are bored, not going any further than their home page. On the opposite end of the spectrum is *Actives* found by Brandtzæg & Heim (2011), *Devotees* identified by Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal (2015) and *Engagers* by Vinerean et al (2013). These are users that create posts, comment on friends and companies' pages, and are generally very active socially on social media.

Table 2.1- Types of Social Media Users

	<i>Low levels of consumption and content creation</i>	<i>High levels of consumption and low levels of content creation</i>	<i>Low levels of consumption and high levels of content creation</i>	<i>High levels of consumption and high levels of content creation</i>
Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015	Entertainment Chasers	Connection Seekers	Attention Seekers	Devotees
Vinerean et al, 2013	Watchers and Listeners	Networker	Expressers and Informers	Engagers
Brandtzæg & Heim ,2011	Sporadics/lurkers	Socialisers/debaters		Actives

Whilst Table 2.1 highlights the similarities between these studies' findings it should be noted that there are groups that do not necessarily fit into this model perfectly. This is due to the studies looking at users in a different way as well as different data collection methods. The actual characteristics of the groups found however are

similar, even if they do not say exactly the same things.

Due to its relevance to Facebook my study focused on and used Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal's (2015) segments when considering the different type of social media users. These categories are well formulated and highlight how both consumption of social media as well as content creation can have a big impact on consumer online behaviour. One thing all these studies highlight is that social media is unique, with people using it in many different ways. The importance of this for marketers is not to be understated; companies can not just use traditional marketing techniques and hope they work, a dedicated approach needs to be made that incorporates how users engage with social media.

2.2.2 - The Brand and Social Media

Social media allows for unique opportunities for organisations to strengthen their brands, with studies focusing on how brands are interpreted by consumers on social media (Akar and Topçu, 2011; Park and Kim, 2014; Davis, Piven and Breazeale, 2014). Davis, Piven and Breazeale (2014) highlight how consumers expect a two-way relationship with brands, with social media offering a way to achieve this. Their qualitative study highlights 5 key areas of brand consumption where social media was key. These include functional consumption, emotional brand consumption and social brand consumption. Performing well in these areas, such as having positive social interactions and being functional can all lead to a better brand image. Park and Kim (2014) found similar benefits to brands using social media, especially in regard to having a brand community. Similar to Davis, Piven and Breazeale (2014)

this study by Park and Kim (2014) found that functional benefits had a positive effect. Functional elements refer to the information that a page provides such as offers or sales announcements. One area of agreement for these studies is that social media can have a positive effect on consumer's perception of the brand if used in the right way and if the brand reputation is already good.

Another study by Schivinski and Dabrowski (2014) found that social media activity by the brand increased consumers' attitudes towards the brand. User generated social media activity increased both brand attitude and brand equity, with both of these having a positive influence on consumers purchase intention. This shows that brands using social media can improve people's brand perception, and if consumers interact and engage with the page then this can have an even bigger impact. One element these studies do not look at is what results in a negative opinion of the brand, or the potential for the brand to be damaged by social media. Exploring this would show that social media needs to be treated like any other marketing channel with care and attention to make sure the brand is not damaged.

Indeed, it's not just what the company posts that can have an impact on a brand image, with user-generated content (UGC) playing a role (Canhoto et al., 2015). Canhoto et al (2015) highlight that what consumers say about a brand on social media can have a huge impact, meaning companies need to engage with online communities, especially during a crisis.

2.3 - The Importance of Emotion

The use of emotion within marketing is an area that has not been as extensively researched as others, with Gaur, Herjanto and Makkarl (2014) finding that only 340 out of 14,321 (2.36%) articles published by major marketing journals between 2002 - 2013 were related to emotion. They argued that the complexity of emotions and difficulty in defining them has discouraged researchers from this area. Whilst this may be true there is still a lot to be found out regarding emotions within marketing, with many areas having room for exploration. One area that was not considered by this article are emotions relating to online marketing. This article also highlights key authors within emotion in marketing, with Richard P Bagozzi contributing the most articles during the time period (e.g Bagozzi, 1991; Bagozzi, 1997; Bagozzi et al., 2016).

Bagozz, Gopinath and Nyer (1999) reviews emotion research in marketing, looking at the effects of emotion on different areas such as cognitive processes, decision making and goal-oriented behaviour. This study helps build our understanding of emotions and how they differ from moods and attitudes. It gives a clear definition of emotion - "a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts". Although only a theoretical review of existing literature, it brings together the different ideas of the time and suggests future research into the subject. It is limited in its relevance due to its age and being more focussed on advertising than social media. That being said it is an important place to start when looking at emotions in relation to marketing.

2.4 - Negative Emotions in Marketing

Negative emotions can be seen as, according to Laros and Steenkamp (2005), anger, fear, sadness and shame. These are the basic negative emotions identified, with each having many more specific emotions related to them. For example, fear has a subordinate level beneath it with emotions such as scared, tense, nervous, panicky, worried and afraid. Although this may be a simplified view of emotions it is important to have these parameters in place when talking about emotions. Without them it is difficult to judge specifically what a negative emotion is, being very subjective in their nature. Other researchers also define negative emotions, creating their own categories. Romani, Grappi and Dalli (2012) define negative emotions as anger, discontent, dislike, embarrassment, sadness, and worry. These are however more relevant to the brand rather than marketing in general, meaning Laros and Steenkamp (2005) is more relevant for this study. When considering the use of negative emotions in marketing it is important to consider the two areas in which they are most commonly used, in social marketing and in commercial marketing. The way they are used in these two areas offer both comparisons and contrasts that need to be explored.

2.4.1 - Social Marketing

Predominately social marketing is where these negative appeals have been used, with charities and governments trying to connect with the public on an emotional level to persuade them to donate or to change their behaviour (Brennan and Binney, 2010; Antonetti, Baines and Walker, 2015; Dillard and Peck, 2000). Non-profit organisations attempt to elicit a response from the public that they hope will be in the form of trying to help or avert the negative outcome from what they see in the

marketing. The messages used also try and change behaviour, with Brennan and Binney (2010) exploring how fear, guilt and shame appeals are used to elicit behaviour compliance from people. In this case, the study looked at how these negative emotional appeals were perceived by those they were aimed at, those receiving welfare support. It looks at whether these appeals affected the participant's behaviour in regards to self-reporting income. It found that rather than achieve this compliance behaviour, using fear, guilt and shame appeals were more likely to make the participants angry and adapt a self-protection mechanism. These maladaptive coping responses meant that the negative appeals were not affective at achieving their aim of changing behaviour. For guilt, it was found that a small level of guilt was accepted by participants but if the appeal was overly forceful then they again adapted self-protection, making the appeal fail at changing their behaviour and attitude. An interesting point raised by this study was at how participants felt that they were bombarded by negative advertising, with the saturation leading to people not caring about the use of these negative emotions. In fact, they reported that they prefer positive adverts, ones that uses humour as an emotive way of communicating with them towards another social issue, speeding.

Another study by Cauberghe et al (2009) looked at how fear appeals have an impact on people's attitudes. They examined the impact of message involvement in anti-speeding PSA (Public Service Announcements). Cauberghe et al (2009) used a quantitative study involving 170 youngsters they found that, in contrast to Brennan and Binney (2010), evoked fear had a positive impact on anti-speeding attitude and intention. Also, if the message was highly relevant to the audience then it was more

likely to be successful. The findings of Cauberghe et al (2009) and Brennan and Binney (2010) show that fear appeals are complex, with both studies looking at very similar topics but finding contrasting results. Perhaps the subject matter had an influence, with the anti-speeding message trying to change attitudes towards speeding whilst the other study looked at changing behaviour. The qualitative nature of Brennan and Binney (2010) also means that the participants can open up a lot more about what they really think about the advertising and how it affects them on a cognitive level. Cauberghe et al's (2009) on the other hand captures the thoughts of the sample in a questionnaire immediately after the PSA is shown, with this showing immediate reactions but not the longer-term effects on attitudes towards speeding.

Indeed, many studies have explored the influence of negative emotional appeals on influencing attitude and behaviour (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Yu and Rhodes, 2004; Manyiwa and Brennan, 2012; Terblanche-Smit and Terblanche, 2010). These studies have varying results, with some showing these appeals to be effective while others found that they do not work in their studies. Often, they attempt to understand the key factors that makes them successful or not, such as message involvement (Cauberghe et al, 2009), self-efficiency (Manyiwa and Brennan, 2012) and ad credibility (Cotte, Coulter and Moore, 2005). The fact there is no consensus within the field as to what makes a negative emotional appeal within social marketing successful shows more research needs to be undertaken.

2.4.2 - Commercial Marketing

Commercial marketing is another area where negative emotions are used, although

for different reasons. For commercial marketing, there is less emphasis on behaviour influencing but more attitude influencing (Roozen, 2013). Trying to get consumers to have a positive outlook on the brand and to show them that the brand has a voice is key here.

Within commercial advertising, a common use of negative emotional appeals is shock advertising. Shock advertising can be seen as an attempt to violate social norms, using surprise in order to capture attention (Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda, 2003). Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) discovered that using shock and fear led to an increase in attention, awareness as well as positively influencing behaviour. Using quantitative research methods, this study highlights the effectiveness of shock at gaining attention, causing participants to remember advertising information, and encouraging engaging behaviours. As the study used laboratory conditions, it is difficult to judge reactions within a naturalistic environment. Additionally, the sample contained a majority of students, causing the average age to be less than the general population. Parry et al (2013) also looked at consumer reactions towards 'shockvertising', using qualitative research methods and focusing on not-for-profit (NFP) and for-profit (FP) uses. Again using a student sample in focus groups, they focused on viewing reactions from a cultural perspective, with members of varying cultures and religions. The research found that the shock advertisements were effective at capturing people's attention, and was found to be accepted by participants more than anticipated. NFP was considered more acceptable than FP. This indicates that when the end goal of the advertisement is to help people, consumers are more accepting of shock advertising, as opposed to when it is to draw

attention to an organisation for profit. They also found religious and cultural differences, such as sexual content and religious taboo being more unacceptable to religious participants. Parry et al (2013) and Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) both highlight the effective uses of shock advertising, showing clearly that there are benefits that justify its use within marketing. With the two studies using contrasting research methods, improving the validity of the findings and making it more applicable to the general population.

Although much of the literature highlights the benefit of shock and fear advertising there is an argument against its overall effectiveness, both within academia and the industry. A study conducted by Hastings, Stead and Webb (2004) theoretically highlights that while fear appeals may be shown to be persuasive within a laboratory setting there is little evidence showing their effectiveness within a natural setting. Additionally, the long term effects of using fear appeals are not being considered, with evidence indicating that fear messages “may encourage maladaptive threat-avoidance, behaviours that may, in themselves, be damaging to health.” (Hastings, Stead and Webb, 2004 p. 978). Whilst further research needs to be made into these claims and into the longer lasting effects of fear appeals, there is also an argument that shock advertising has become ineffective and perhaps even obsolete. Urwin (2014) looked at the effectiveness of shock advertising amongst generation Y consumers within modern society. Using quantitative methods this study determines that shock advertising is ineffective. It highlights how the imagery of the advertisement is what’s imprinted in the memory of the consumer, rather than the brand itself, thus reducing effectiveness. It also found that shock advertisements

were considered dull and unpleasant, suggesting just how accustomed younger consumers had become to shock within advertising. These studies highlight that shock advertising and the use of negative emotional appeals within advertising need to be carefully considered. Whilst they may grab attention amongst some population segments, within others they may be easily forgotten. The use of shock advertising and negative emotional appeals within social media marketing has not been explored fully; does the interactivity consumers have with companies and their shock and negative appeals affect their cognitive processing and outcomes? Being able to customise the sort of advertising a consumer wants to see on social media could potentially lead to different reactions and outcomes.

Whilst both social marketing and commercial marketing use negative emotional appeals there are difference to how consumers respond to them. Roozen (2013) looked at the difference between the effectiveness of commercials for not-for-profit and for-profit brands that used an emotional appeal. They looked at warm and sad emotional appeals, with the fear and guilt appeals discussed previously not looked at. They found that for both not-for-profit and for-profit that sad appeals were preferred by participants, although more for not-for-profit brands. Recall and recognition were also better for the sad appeal, with the study highlighting how the novelty of the use of sadness may generate more attention. Whilst this study highlights the potential benefits of using negative emotions in advertising, especially sadness, it does not look at other negative emotions that might influence the consumer. Emotions such as guilt, fear and anger will have a different impact, meaning when considering negative emotions these all need to be taken into account. His study shows that for-profit

companies also benefit from these techniques.

2.5 - Gender Differences

One element that's been explored in the literature and provides an interesting aspect to explore is gender differences in responding to emotional appeals in marketing. Whilst this is an interesting caveat, it is not a key aspect of this study. It is simply something that may have an impact as studies have explored whether there is a gender difference when dealing with emotions in marketing. Kemp, Kennett-Hensel and Kees (2013) looked at the impact on sympathy and pride appeals in charitable marketing, exploring how these were perceived by different genders in relation to intention to donate money. They found that sympathy appeals were a lot more effective for women than pride appeals. Men on the other hand showed very little difference between the two. Although this study only looked at given intentions rather than actual giving behaviour it highlights an importance difference between the genders. This is backed up by Wang's (2008) study into gender difference when looking at PSA's that have either a sad appeal or a rational appeal. They found that women had a more favourable attitude towards helping when faced with a sad appeal rather than a rational appeal. Wang (2008) also found that males showed no significant difference to either appeal. These two studies have highly similar findings, emotional appeals that use negative emotions such as sadness and sympathy are more likely to be much more effective than alternatives for women as opposed to men. Whilst this shows that sadness and sympathy are more effective for women than men it does not tell us how the genders react to a variety of different emotions such as happiness or fear.

Another study that offers a differing view point is Hur, Kim and Jang's (2015) study looking at the role of gender in consumer's perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). They examined impact on corporate brand equity, corporate distrust and corporate hypocrisy. Whilst they found that women had a greater perception and awareness of CSR they also found that there was a stronger positive relationship from men between CSR perception and corporate brand equity. CSR perception also has a stronger negative influence on corporate mistrust and corporate hypocrisy for men than for women. Essentially this means that men are more influenced by CSR activities in regards to their opinion of the brand, both positively and negatively. Whilst not related to emotional appeals, Hur et al's (2015) study does show that men are influenced by marketing, especially that which shows a company is trying to have a positive influence on the world around them. It opens the idea that men are also influenced by marketing messages related giving and helping others. More research into the difference in what women and men say regarding negative emotional appeals would allow for a more in-depth understanding of why, if any, there are gender differences.

2.6 - Negative Emotions and Positive Outcomes

One element of negative emotions within marketing is when negative emotions can enhance the consumption experience. Negative emotions such as fear, guilt or shock can lead to an enhanced and even more pleasurable experience, with both negative and positive emotions coexisting. Two studies highlighted this phenomenon, Andrade and Cohen (2007) looking at how positive and negative emotions can be experienced

simultaneously and Goldsmith, Cho and Dhar (2012) exploring how guilt can lead to an enhanced pleasurable consumption experience.

Andrade and Cohen (2007) explored how negative emotions and experiences are consumed by looking at horror films, where people watch them even though it goes against the hedonist assumptions placed on consumer behaviour. It was hypothesised that negative and positive emotion can be experienced simultaneously, using the co-activation concept that puts forward how different parts of the brain are active for different emotions. They found that positive and negative emotions can coexist at the same time. They do however find that when an individual constructs a "protective frame" of mind in regards to a threat, this is enough to convince them that the danger is not real. The authors found that participants that were detached were more likely to experience positive feeling as well as negative. This is an interesting consideration for this study, to look into just how attached people can get to social media posts, and whether these findings apply to other negative emotions. Co-activation could be used to understand experiences of simultaneous positive and negative feeling.

Goldsmith, Cho and Dhar (2012) look at how guilt enhances pleasure received from hedonistic consumption. They examine how "priming" guilt before a hedonic consumption experience can increase the pleasure received from that experience. They used 6 studies that were quantitative by nature, using experiments and surveys to collect data. Having six studies that look at different types of hedonic consumption in food, dating and film shows that the results are not solely generalised to one type

such as food. Their research suggests that feelings of guilt lead to greater pleasure during consumption. This shows how a negative emotion can have a positive effect on other emotions. This study is useful as it shows just how complex emotions can be

These studies highlight how emotions are not simple, negative emotions are not always a hindrance within marketing and can lead to positive consumption experiences. Whether this is true in regards to social media needs to be discovered, also whether initial negative emotions can lead to positive emotions and experiences would be interesting to determine.

2.7 - Social Media and Emotional Attachment

One of the unique traits of social media is its very personal nature, a person's social media account and can form part of their identity. Interacting with people and companies using social media is a method of experiencing the world, and entails a variety of human reactions that we experience in our day to day life such as emotional attachments.

Hudson et al (2015) discovered that interacting with a music festival on social media had a direct positive effect on emotional attachment, which in turn influenced electronic word of mouth. This study made some interesting points regarding the role of emotions in marketing. It highlights how little is known about how social media influences emotions and attachment to brands in general. It also addresses the fact that emotions are often independent of conscious control, meaning simply that

emotions “happen”. This is a key element to consider when dealing with emotions; they are as Bagozz, Gopinath and Nyer (1999) suggested, “states of readiness” and are not often voluntary experiences. The study uses quantitative research methods including online surveys. It records the correlative relationship between the use of social media by festival goers and what level of brand attachment is experienced. One issue with this is that it is correlative - there is no evidence to emphatically show causation. This study showed how emotional attachment to an event can be linked to social media use and how a positive experience on social media can lead to positive word of mouth (WOM) and to favourable recommendations. This highlights the importance of social media as a marketing tool. A key point made is that “emotional responses triggered by marketing communications play a dominant role in explaining behavioural outcomes.” suggesting emotional responses have a big impact on consumer behaviour. However, these results are limited to music festivals; brands that do not offer a hedonistic output might not see the same sort of results. Researching other types of consumption activities would be useful to broaden our understanding of social media and general consumption.

Lin and Utz (2015) look at how posts on Facebook by “friends” can cause both positive (happiness) and negative (envy) emotions to arise. It also looks at tie strength and how this can influence these emotional outcomes. Tie strength is the relationship between one party and another, in this case the relationship with the friend on Facebook. A strong tie would be someone such as family, whilst a weak tie would be an acquaintance. Tie strength can also be applied to connections such as brands or groups. According to the authors, happiness on Facebook stem from

emotional cognition, human tendency to experience similar emotions to others in social interactions. Envy on the other hand arises from upward comparison - when people compare themselves to others who are better off.

Lin and Utz (2015) used two studies to explore the emotional outcomes of reading posts on Facebook and the role of tie strength. One involved exploratory and correlational methods, using an online questionnaire for active Facebook users who were asked to report 4 recent posts from different posters on their newsfeeds. The other study used scenarios to test the tie strength and emotional reactions. One issue with this is that participants were asked to *imagine* a strong tie posting a status. Simply imagining something is not the same as experiencing it. There is a lack of objective meaning behind certain items such as tie strength - what exactly determines a close bond with another? Exactly whether a person has a strong tie with an individual is very subjective. However, the research does show a variety of emotions can be experienced when using Facebook and the strength of the tie a person has will help determine their emotional response. This supports Shen et al (2016) who looked at the impact of Tie strength on the success of internet advertising. They found that tie strength was incredibly important in moderating consumer's attitudes towards the advertisement message. Adverts that were shared by close friends were received a lot more favourably, with consumers having confidence in the source. These studies highlight how the emotional connection a person has with another person or brand will determine their responses and attitudes. Knowing this helps us when it comes to understanding the effectiveness of some social media marketing.

2.8 - Mistrust of Marketing

One area that is important to understand and goes hand in hand with negative emotions is a distrust of marketing. Two key studies in this area are Heath and Heath (2008) and Heath and Chatzidakis (2012). Heath and Heath (2008) looks specifically at consumers perception of marketing and the negative aspects whilst Heath and Chatzidakis (2012) look at the transformative potential of marketing and how consumer perceptions are making this difficult. Both studies have very similar results, with there being found to be a distrust in marketing activity. A key element of this mistrust in both studies was the attitude and perception that marketing campaigns were dishonest and manipulative. Heath and Heath (2008) found that most negative attitudes towards marketing stemmed from a time when the consumer had felt deceived. This could be because the marketing was believed to be misleading, manipulative or dishonest. The marketing was believed to not be giving consumers the whole picture and making them buy products that were not what they expected them to be. Heath and Chatzidakis (2012) looked at whether marketing could play a positive transformative role in society. They found a concern in the manipulative nature of marketing and its impact on vulnerable people. Participants also did not think they were independent, with marketing having an influence over their decision making. One finding that stands out here is that when participants were asked to choose a definition of marketing they overwhelmingly chose either a business focused or unethical definition, rather than the American Marketing Association (AMA) which sees marketing in a positive light. This shows that whilst some participants wish marketing to be good for society most simply feel it is

unethical and sole purpose is to make corporations money.

Interestingly both studies found a positive light, with Heath and Heath (2008) finding that most participants wanted marketing to exist, that it had an important role in informing consumers of new products. Indeed, Heath and Chatzidakis (2012) found many participants felt marketing could have a positive influence on society. That 'ideal marketing' would be ethical and able to change society for the better. These ideas that marketing can improve and still be an important aspect of our lives shows that there is still aspect of this mistrust to discover.

2.9 - Conclusion

The literature highlights the importance of emotions within marketing and how negative emotional appeals have been used with more traditional areas such as advertising. The impact of negative emotional appeals is still up for debate, with an argument for a reduction of the effects as younger generations become desensitized to these appeals. Also highlighted is the social aspect of social media, emotions are shared within a social platform which can be determined by past experiences and the closeness an individual feels to a page or person. Whilst these studies highlight a connection using quantitative methods they lack the insights into what exactly makes social media unique in this sense - they do not explore how or even if the unique traits of social media have an effect on consumer behaviours and reactions. Using qualitative methods would help explore thoughts and feelings towards negative emotions on social media in more depth, rather than just establishing a relationship.

Furthermore, the literature review emphasises the quantitative nature of the studies. As Gaur, Herjanto and Makkarl (2014) point out only 7% of the research into emotions within marketing between 2002-2013 was qualitative, with the majority (70%) being quantitative. Whilst this is a very useful research method this study will be qualitative in order to delve deeper into consumer's thoughts and feelings. Qualitative data will allow this study to fully explore consumer opinions and attitudes towards brands and help explain why they feel this way. Also the unique nature of social media can be explored in order to determine how consumers react.

2.10 - Research Objectives

Having explored current research in the field, it is important to consider the aims of this research. Previous research has highlighted a connection between social media and emotions, emotional attachment occurring within this online environment (Hudson et al, 2015). The use of negative emotions by organisations on social media has not yet been explored, with previous research focusing more on print advertising (Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda, 2003 and Parry et al, 2013). Whilst similarities can be assumed they also have many differences, with Mangold and Faulds (2009) highlighting that social media is interactive, meaning that consumers can interact with organisations by sending messages and commenting on their posts. This opens up two-way conversations and allows consumers to instantly voice their opinion, and in return get a response from the company directly. How negative emotions are used on this platform and how consumers perceive them is the primary focus of this study, leading to the research question:

“How do consumers perceive organisational use of negative emotion on Facebook

and what, if any, impact does this have on their perceptions of the brand?"

Exploring consumer perceptions here is important; does the consumer feel the negative emotion the company intends them to feel? It is also important to determine if these negative emotions cause any reactions that do not occur with positive emotions. Before delving into consumer perceptions there is a clear need for this study to determine actual occasions where organisations have used or tried to incite negative emotions from their consumers on social media. For this study Facebook is used due it being the largest social media site in the world (World Economic Forum, 2017). The reactions of the organisation's "followers" is important to determine, leading to this study's first research objective (RO1):

RO1: Explore if inciting the negative emotions of anger, fear and sadness create "likes", "reactions", "shares" and comments on Facebook.

This objective is an important first step - it identifies real life situations in which negative emotions have an impact on the consumer. Whilst this will not give in-depth insights into how consumers process these emotions, it will give an indication of the possible outcomes and reactions that these posts generate. These are however only the visible actions and looking at these does not tell you how those who do not interact with the post in terms of "sharing" or "liking" feel about the content. In February 2016 Facebook introduced "reactions", with users able to show different emotions towards posts by clicking on an emoji (BBC.co.uk, 2016). These emotions are HaHa, Love, Angry, Sad and Wow. This development can tell me a lot about the emotions that consumers feel when interacting with a post, some posts however may from before this time meaning these posts are only "liked". The emotions of anger,

sadness and fear were chosen after looking at the literature and determine which emotions are more likely to be used on Facebook

RO2: Gain insights into the emotions these posts incite and how consumers interpret the messages put across.

This objective aims to look deeper into the consumer's psyche, delving into how they process the information presented to them by a brand. This objective's focus is on how consumers process the social media posts containing negative emotion. What is their immediate response and does this differ from posts with positive emotional content? This will tell me important information about how consumers who do not necessarily interact with a social media post interpret these messages.

RO3: Determine the outcomes to the use of negative emotions in relation to the brand and consumer's opinion of their use within marketing.

This objective looks at what impact negative emotions have on consumer's outcomes, on what they take away from the marketing messages. This includes any long term effect on their opinion of the brand as well as what they feel about their use in marketing in general. This is important to find out as consumer's perception of the brand can have a big impact on their purchasing behaviour. Answering this question will help determine whether the use of negative emotions in marketing is both acceptable and if they help improve the brand image.

RO4: Determine whether different types of Facebook users interact and interpret negative posts in the same way.

Previous research into social media has identified that users interact and engage with the medium in different ways (Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015; Vinerean et al, 2013; Brandtzæg & Heim ,2011). Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal (2015) four segmentation of Facebook users will be most applicable for this study as it encompasses many of the features that different studies have found. These four types of users will be identified in order to understand whether they use these platforms differently as this could be useful information for organisations to understand. Identifying whether there is a difference between types of users would prove a useful insight.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

3.1 - Philosophy

This chapter will explore the different philosophical positions that social research can undertake and which stance this research will take. It is important to define this at this early stage as the philosophy plays a key role in the values and outcomes of the research, giving a solid grounding and helping shape the research project (Carson et al, 2001). Within social science multiple philosophical paradigms have arisen, which according to Delanty (2005) is mainly due to the dispute surrounding the positivist philosophy. Whilst multiple approaches exist they all broadly fit within two paradigms, positivism and interpretivism (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Identifying the key characteristic of these philosophical approaches will allow for a greater understanding of how social research is undertaken.

3.1.1 - Positivism

A positivist paradigm, is according to Bryman (2012), where the research methods of the natural sciences is applied to the study of social reality. It sees the social world as objective, existing as its own phenomena. Knowledge is gathered by facts and research aims to measure and explain social phenomena. An objective view of the reality is, according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), where social entities are perceived as existing independently of how we view them. Objective research sees the researcher being detached during the research process. It perceives that interpretations by social actors do not have an influence on the existence of a social

world, meaning they are not important. Carson et al (2001) highlights how positivism's ontological perspective is that there is a single external reality, where researchers have direct access to the real world. Guba and Lincoln (1994) highlight that positivism aims to *explain* phenomena in order to be able to control and predict it.

An important element of positivism to consider is its axiology, which focuses on the role of ethics and values within research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Positivists believe research should be value free, meaning researches are detached from what they are researching (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The objects that positivists are researching are understood to be unaffected by the research and were present before the research is conducted and will continue to exist after it has been completed. Positivism is commonly associated with quantitative data collection techniques, although qualitative data can be collected from a positivist philosophy (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Positivism is not without its critics however, with the debate surrounding the philosophy leading to multiple alternatives arising, the main one being interpretivism (Delanty, 2005).

3.1.2 - Interpretivism

An interpretive paradigm takes a subjective view of the world, this is where reality is socially constructed by people or "social actors" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Language, social actions and individual perceptions are key to creating this social reality and each unique individual comprehends the world in their own way. Subjective research is interested in the narratives of the different social realities of

actors and the opinions of people. Thiétart (2001) highlights how the social world is made up of interpretations of actors, how a situation can be interpreted differently by different social actors meaning that the reality is different according to each individual. Subjectivism draws a clear distinction between understanding and explaining, where understanding the meaning actors give to reality is important rather than explaining knowledge.

An interpretivist epistemology is one where the reality is seen as highly subjective, and where our perceptions shape it (Collis and Hussey, 2009). An important difference between these two paradigms is the relationship between the researcher and what is being researched. With interpretivism there is attempt to minimize the distance between the two, as opposed to a positivist researcher who attempts to be independent and only measure facts (Collis and Hussey, 2009). This is highlighted in the axiology, which sees researchers as being involved with what is being researched, with values within research helping it become relevant. The key element of interpretivism that highlights its importance is how the focus is to gain rich and new interpretations of our social worlds (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

3.1.3 - Choosing a Philosophy – Interpretivism

There is no “right” way to approach research, with positivism, interpretivism and other approaches being suitable for different types of problems and questions. When considering the philosophy of the research it is important to take into account the purpose and objectives of the research. The purpose of this research is to *explore*, to gain an *insight* into how consumers perceive negative emotions. This intent to gain

insights rather than measuring facts allows for an interpretivist perspective. A positivist approach to this research would look solely at the outcomes, the variables that occur in the object's external reality. Trying to find how consumers react and why will require in-depth conversations that allow for detail insights.

The objectives of this study also lend themselves towards an interpretive paradigm. RO2 focuses on how consumers interpret negative emotions on social media, this interpretation is unique to the individual consumer and takes place within their own social reality. This research also looks to build theory, which according to Carson et al (2001) is when a study looks to gain understanding and derive meaning rather than testing previous theory. This is a key element of this research, to gain an understanding into the phenomena of negative emotions on social media and how consumers interpret them.

With this study it is important to consider the role of the researcher. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) highlights how within interpretivism the researchers own values and beliefs play a role within the research. Within this research the researcher is seen as being empathetic and engaged with participants and this is important in order to draw out key insights into the topic. This is opposed to a positivist researcher, who would attempt to keep themselves as the researcher distanced from those that they are studying (Carson et al, 2001).

This research focused on the subjective meanings in order to understand how consumers interpret negative emotions on social media. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016: 140) describes how "the purpose of interpretivist research is to create new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds". This

research's purpose was to achieve greater understanding of how consumers perceive negative emotions on social media and what effect this has on the opinion of the brand itself. It can be argued that social media is part of our social world, a tool that is used to interact with others. This highlights how interpretivism helped shaped this research, with this philosophical viewpoint being the starting block that this research has built upon. It also shows how interpretive methodologies are appropriate for this research.

3.2 - Data Collection Methods

Having determined an interpretivist philosophical framework for this study I now move on to the different data collection methods that will be used. It is important to highlight the characteristics that make them suitable for this research in order to justify their inclusion.

3.2.1 - Qualitative Data

It is important to make a distinction between *qualitative* and *quantitative* data before moving on to the different research methods. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) describes quantitative data as being numerical, data that can be quantified. Punch (1998) describes how quantitative research uses structured and predetermined frameworks and research questions, with quantitative data being used to test hypotheses. Qualitative data on the other hand is that which can not be quantified, with words and images rather than numbers being the key data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Qualitative research aims to get an indepth understanding of

the how and why, the meaning behind the words that are collected (Carson et al, 2001). It is inductive in nature, meaning that theory is built from the research. The aim with inductive research is to explore and create theory rather than testing a hypothesis or idea.

Table 3.1 highlights the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative data, taken from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (p569, 2016)

Table 3.1 – Distinctions between quantitative and qualitative data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, p569, 2016)

Quantitative data	Qualitative Data
Based on meanings derived from numbers	Based on meanings expressed through words (spoken and textual) and images
Collection results in numerical and standardised data	Collection results in non-standardised data requiring classification into categories
Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics	Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualisation

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016, p569)

This research used qualitative data, with the emphasis being on gaining insights into consumer perceptions. The focus of the research was to understand how negative emotions are perceived. This could have been done using quantitative data, measuring and counting instances. This would however fail to find the *meaning* behind what is being said, with no exploration into why consumers feel the way they do. Qualitative data allowed for words to be used and themes to arise, allowing for a

greater depth of understanding of consumer's thoughts and opinions. This study used two well-known qualitative data collection techniques, online observations and interviews.

3.2.2 - Online Observation

This research aims to explore attitudes and perceptions within and regarding an online environment. In order to understand online behaviour this study used online observations. Online observation has, according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), led to various terms such as netnography (Kozinets, 2002)., online ethnography (Tunçalp and L. Lê, 2014) and webethnography (Prior and Miller, 2012). Within consumer research one of the most developed of these terms is netnography, an online form of ethnography. Ethnography is a research method where the researcher observes a group of people in order to gain insights into how they interpret social reality (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The aim is to understand the world in the same way the group's members do, often by becoming part of the group in order to experience the same things. This allows for deep and insightful observations into how the social group interacts and interprets the world (Carson et al, 2001). Netnography takes this onto an online environment, observing cultures and communities that are based online (Kozinets, 2002). This online observation allows for deeper insight into how consumers use the internet, allowing for qualitative data that can reveal the meanings and values behind online behaviour.

Whilst a lot of the elements from netnography are applicable to this study some are not due to the participatory nature. Kozinets (2006) highlights how within netnography the researcher is often part of the community, contributing to the discussion or having an influence over other members. This is the ethnographic element of netnography rather than simply online observations which are much more distant. One issue with using Kozinets (2015) netnography is that as he has developed the term, more and more restrictive rules as to what defines true netnography have been put in place. These are rules regarding how the observer should also participate within the community, and how to inform the online community regarding when and how the research takes place. Many elements of netnography prove to be useful within this study although the nature of this study and the research objectives lend itself more to online observations.

Online observation was important to use within this study, with RO1 in particular lending itself to this method. Observing how users interact with negative posts on Facebook shows what sort of emotions these posts elicit from consumers. Observing actual situations in which negative emotions have flared up proved to be useful insights and built the base for further research. It does however give us a limited view of how consumers react, we are unable to see how those that do not interact with the post respond. They could simply stop following the page and we would not be able to determine this, especially when followers run into the hundreds of thousands for certain pages. Therefore, interviews were carried out in order to gain even deeper insights into how the average social media user reacts.

3.2.3 - Interviews

Interviews are a prominent data collection method within interpretive research, allowing for reliable and valid qualitative data that is relevant to the research question (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). In essence, they are a method of collecting data from participants (interviewee/interviewees), where a conversation is had between the researcher and the participant. The purpose is to get inside participant's heads, to see what they see and have an understanding of it (Carson et al, 2001).

The type of interview varies depending on how structured and rigours they are, with interviews ranging from unstructured to highly structured (Punch, 1998). Structured interviews involve a set of questions that often are not deviated from and give respondents limited scope to respond (Bryman, 2012). This is often a positivist approach as the aim is not to understand how consumers interpret situations within their own social reality but rather how participants act in one objective reality. For interpretive interviewing there are two main methods, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Within a semi structured interview, the researcher has some key questions and themes that they wish to be covered, with room to explore these further and ask probing questions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

Unstructured interviews on the other hand are more informal, with themes set out before the interview but with the questions arising during the interview (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Both have their strengths and weakness, with semi structured interviews giving a good base to work from although they can be restrictive in what questions are asked. Unstructured on the other hand might be difficult for useful data

to arise due to the lack of any set questions, that being said due to the unstructured nature insights can arise from where the researcher does not expect (Bryman, 2012).

This study used interviews in order to get a deep understanding of consumer's social realities. They are used to find out the perspectives within someone's head (Carson et al, 2001) which means they are highly applicable for this study. This study aimed to explore how consumers perceive negative emotions, how they react and process the information presented to them. In order to gain a deep understanding and answer the *how* and *why* questions interviews are used to tell us more about how consumers feel. Unstructured interviews were used as well in order to have an informal and open conversation, where new insights could potentially be drawn from. Interviews are used rather than focus groups in order to keep the conversation focused on how the individual feels with the potential for group influences having an effect with focus groups (Carson et al, 2001). To sum up, interviews allow for a deep exploration into the consumers thought process and understanding of their social world, with these being key points to discover for this study.

3.3 - Research Design

Now that I have looked at the different methodologies used I can go into more detail regarding the design of each method. Three key factors regarding the design of the research will be looked at including:

- Sample – a look at the size, make up and how participants will be acquired.

- Process and data collection – During online observations this includes what was looked at and how the data was collected. With interviews it is in regard to structure and content.
- Ethics – with each methodological choice important ethical issues need to be considered. Ensuring research is ethical is imperative in order to gather valuable data.

Once these areas have been explored then Data Analysis will be looked at, including details of the data analysis process that was used.

3.4 - Online Observations

3.4.1 - Sample

For the online observations the sample involved a couple of different factors. First of all, the sample included posts that a company uploaded to their social media accounts, these included text, pictures, external links and even videos. Organisations that generate posts that incite negative emotions were chosen with their posts observed if they meet the necessary criteria. This comes from an extensive search of companies on Facebook. This search lasted 3 months and included looking at over 100 different companies Facebook pages, ranging from multinational fast food companies to national pet food suppliers.

Second it is the individual social media users who comment on and like these posts, the comments and interactions. Their responses provided valuable data as to how

some consumers interact with the brand on social media. The total number of posts used for this study was 5, with this number lower than hoped for but still offering an insight into the types of emotions used. The number of 5 was settled on after the extensive search had come to an end. This is due to the rarity in the use of negative emotions on social media. Another round of research could have been undertaken to find more posts but after analysis the number was found to be acceptable in achieving the goal set out in RO1. The posts came from a range of markets, such as pet services, beverage, Insurance and a publication.

3.4.2 - Process and Data Collection

Companies posting or inciting negative emotions on Facebook are relatively rare, with a focus on more positive interactions with consumers being the norm. It does happen though, with various examples arising both intentionally and unintentionally. The first stage of the online observation required finding instances that meet the criteria, being a challenge within itself. These criteria were:

- Be a post on a company's Facebook page
- The post must have comments and "reactions"
- Intentionally use Sadness, Anger or Fear within a Facebook Post OR
Unintentionally invoke Sadness, Anger or Fear in users due to the posts content. This was based on Facebooks users "reactions" (either Angry or Sad emoji) as well their use of emotive language within the comments.

Once posts were identified, the data collected showed how consumers interacted with the posts. The data that was analysed here is the number and types of “reactions” these posts generate as well as the number and content of the comments. For example, whether a post had lots of HaHa reactions or lots of Sad reactions can give an immediate indicator of the content of the posts. Comments are also crucial as this says exactly what the Facebook user thinks of the post, whether this be good or bad and whether emotive language is used. All the posts identified had been posted on the Facebook page for at least a few months, with some even being posted years before this study. The longer a post has been active the longer chance there has been for more Facebook users to see the post. However, after a few weeks or months the post will not be very visible due to it not showing on people’s Facebook news feed, meaning it’s unlikely that new comments are added after this time period and negates any sort of differences between a post that is a few years old to one that’s a few months old.

This is where those being observed were informed of the study taking place. The researcher was a “complete observer”, a “lurker” where the researcher is not participating within the online community and simply observing (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Being a part of the community is not required for the nature of this study as I was merely exploring how consumers have reacted to posts with negative emotion, not trying to create any discussions myself or having to become a member to blend in. A comment was put by the researcher on the post informing those that their data would be used in this study, they were then given the chance to opt out should they wish to do so.

3.4.3 - Ethics

Online observations have the potential to have multiple ethical issues if the researcher is not careful, with Kozinets (2015) highlighting some areas that need to be considered. First there is the issue of informed consent, often participants are not directly giving information to a researcher, rather the researcher finding information the participant has posted online. What information is public and which is private is also an issue, on social media users may have some of their profile public but this does not necessary make it public information, it may only be shared with friends of friends (D'Arcy and Young, 2012). Within this study we view public social media pages as public information. Consent was obtained with a "opt out" policy, with any posts that were used within the data analysis process having a comment regarding the nature of the research. This allows for a blanket approach, allowing for anyone uncomfortable with the research to not have their information be used. Anonymity is another important element to consider, with Kozinets (2015) highlighting this as a crucial part of maintaining research ethics. Within this study participants were completely anonymous; no names of social media were used. Finally, it is important to consider any harm that will come to those being researched. Care needs to be taken to ensure those being observed are not exposed in a way that could come back to them in a negative way. As Kozinets (2015) highlights communities on social media can be vulnerable, meaning it is important for the research to not offend and to consider participants as human subjects with human emotions. This study was merely observing actions on social media that had already happened, meaning there was little chance of causing harm.

3.5 - Interview

3.5.1 - Sample

For the in-depth interviews the only initial criteria were that the participants are users of Facebook. Also, to achieve RO4 the participants were categorized into one of Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal's (2015) four types of Facebook users: Entertainment Chasers, Attention Seekers, Devotees and Connection Seekers. This was done by the participants themselves before they were asked to interview.

Participants were given descriptions of each segment's behaviour on Facebook and asked to put themselves in the group they believed they matched. The total number of interviews was 16, with every type of user interviewed at least twice. It consisted of 9 females and 7 Males, with an age range of 18-33. The sample was gained using convenience sampling initially followed by snowball sampling. Convenience sampling uses participants easiest to obtain whilst snowball sample uses participants suggested by the initial participants, with both being non-probability samples (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). The first participants were recruited based on their convenience, they were my friends, colleagues and family members. These then suggested people who made up the rest of my participants. These people were asked to take part in a study about social media, not knowing anything about the details of the study. There was no specific gender or age balance aimed for at the beginning of the study, with the number being split being almost evening being a coincidence. The total of 16 interviews was decided upon after the research had been undertaken due to the volume of content and the nature of interview responses meaning further interviews wouldn't have been much more beneficial. Time

constraints also led to the decision to stop at this number. The interviews lasted between 10-45 minutes, with this varying depending on the engagement of the participant and what their views were. The average was roughly 20 minutes per participant. Interviews took place either face to face or via skype, although only 3 took place over skype. The others either took place at my home or at the University Library.

3.5.2 - Process and Data Collection

A key element to the interview was the inclusion of stimuli. Participants were shown 'mock' Facebook pages which had different emotions on them. One was solely positive (see Appendix 3.1) whilst the other used negative emotions (see Appendix 3.2). This Facebook page and its contents were completely fictional, no other page had used the same links to the researcher's knowledge. Some posts did include links to external sites and content that was real. The sector used was pet services, there were two mock pages with the organisation being the same on both. Pet Services was used as there is an emotional element to this, people love their pets and the potential for using negative emotions was more present. Also, the online observations found a couple of examples where pet services companies used negative emotion, highlighting that there were real life examples of pet services companies using these. One of the pages contained solely positive posts whilst the other contained some posts containing negative emotion. Each Page contained five different posts, with the negative page having two neutral ones and 3 posts with negative emotions. These were anger/sadness, fear, and guilt/shame which encompassed different types of emotions that companies use to communicate with customers. The anger/sadness post involved sharing an article about abused kittens

and the post text using emotive language that portrays anger and sadness. The fear post involves sharing an article about how humans can get worms from dogs. The guilt/shame post uses emotive language to try and shame those who do not microchip their pet and potentially make these people feel guilt.

The pages were shown in a different order, with the first participant being shown the positive page first whilst the second was showed the negative page first. This was carried on with participants alternating between the two pages. All participants were also asked to self-select themselves into one of Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal's (2015) type of Facebook user. Descriptions of these groups were given to participants (see Appendix 3.3) and they were asked which one they felt suited them most. This helped identify how participants used Facebook.

These stimuli were used in order to generate discussion, to get interviewees talking about how they feel and what their initial reactions would be. Due to the rarity of negative posts it would have been difficult for participants to recall occasions where they have encountered them on Facebook, meaning that they needed to be presented to them at this stage in order to generate conversation. The interviews were unstructured, with topics of conversation rather than set questions. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) unstructured interviews are informal, where there is no list of predetermined questions. Using unstructured interviews allows for exploration into consumer perceptions. They were highly applicable for this study due to the nature of topic, with the stimuli acting as a talking point that could lead further into how these negative posts are internally processed. Topics of conversation included immediate reactions to the use of negative emotions, as well as digging

deeper into how these types of posts make them feel. This included asking participants which Facebook page they preferred and what they thought of the stimuli posts for both the positive and negative pages. There was also topics that looked at how participants feel companies should act on social media as well as the differences between what charities can post and what companies can post.

3.5.3 – Ethics

When undertaking interviews, it is important for the researcher to consider the feelings of participants. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) highlights how interviewers should not make the interviewee stressed or uncomfortable. Questions that are demeaning to the interviewee would be inappropriate, with the avoidance of pushing too hard for a response also important. This study took this into account, with questions that explored participant's thoughts but did not make them uncomfortable. Carson et al (2001) highlights how gaining consent is important when collecting data. Consent was gained for every interview undertaken, with participants understanding what the research was for. Consent forms (see Appendix 3.4) were signed and participants had full knowledge of what was being researched.

One element of potential ethical concern for this study was purposely exposing participants to posts containing negative emotions, that could potentially make them feel sad or angry. This was necessary to determine their reaction to the use of these negative emotions. Simply asking them without these stimuli would require them to presume how they would react rather than having this natural reaction. Participants were told that the study was about social media and not about the use of negative

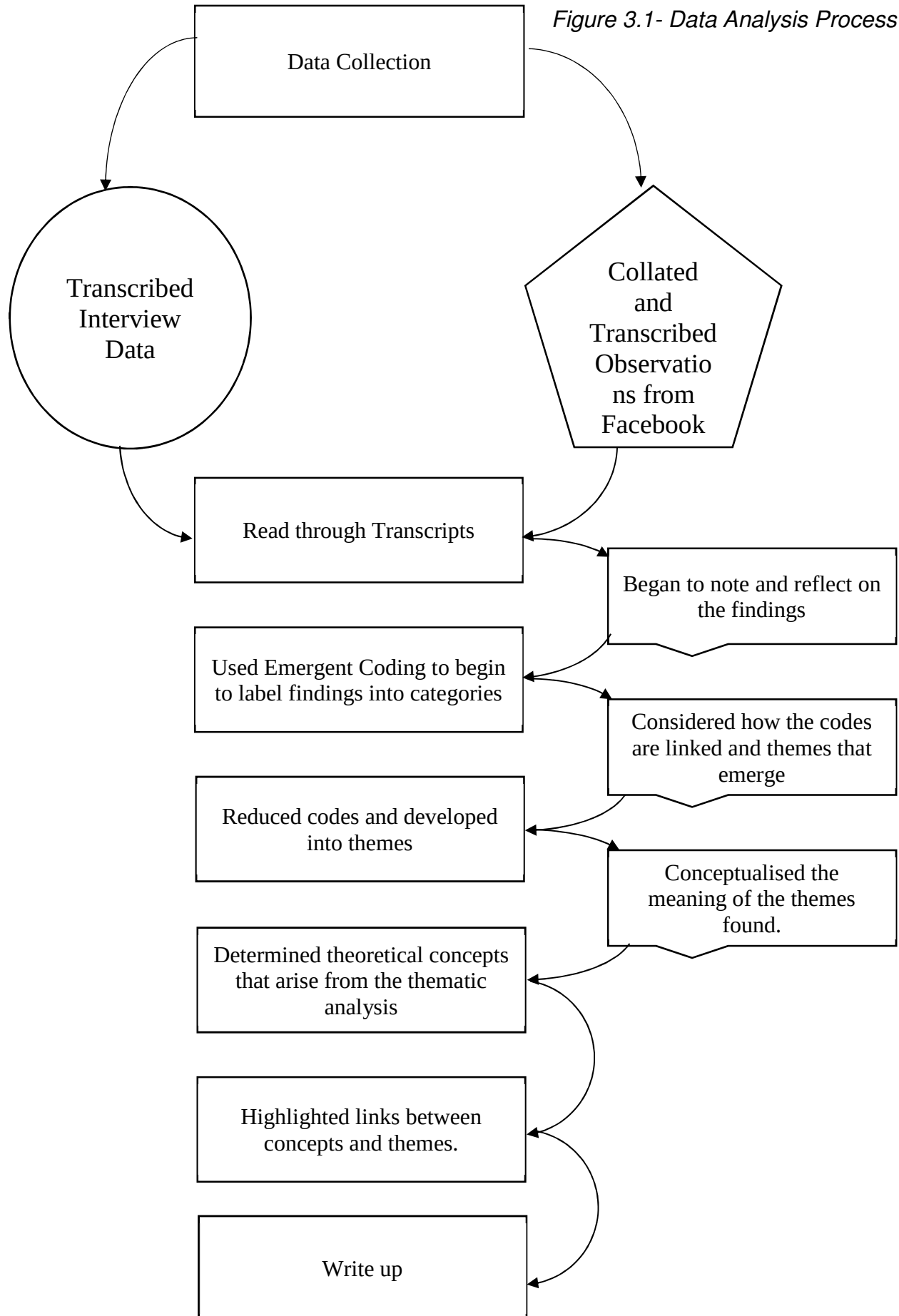
emotions in order to capture their natural reaction. The reaction needed to be as close to what it would be if the participant was just browsing their Facebook and came across these posts. To minimize the potential harm to participants the severity of the emotions used was kept to a minimum, there was no extreme content or anything that could potentially have a lasting effect. Also, participants had a full debriefing regarding what the study was for and why they were kept in the dark regarding the nature of the study. Whilst some participants felt sad or angry after the posts these emotions soon passed and once they were debriefed they were happy they had participated.

3.6 - Data Analysis

Having looked at how the research was undertaken it is important to explore how the data were analysed. The two different research methods followed a similar pattern, using the same analysis techniques to understand the data. The first set of data collected was the observational data, this involved capturing the post looked at with screenshots and transcribing the comments that went with it (see Figures 4.1 – 4.10). The interview data was the transcribes from the interview (for example see Appendix 3.5), everything that was said by both the researcher and participant. This research used thematic analysis, this is where the researcher codes the qualitative data in order to identify themes and patterns related to the research question (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Each section of the data was coded with a code that symbolised the meaning within the extract. Codes begin by being descriptive of the content, before moving onto a 2nd tier where the patterns are coded (Punch, 1998).

Finding themes that emerge from the interviews was important as this tells us a lot about consumer perceptions and the similarities between consumers (Bryman, 2002). Coding the transcripts is an important element to qualitative analysis, with codes highlighting the key aspects of what was said. Further codes can go beyond what was merely said, recognising a pattern and the meaning behind the words. This then allows for themes to be identified, with repetition in areas related to the research question being a criteria for a theme (Bryman, 2012). Identifying these themes provided rich insights into how consumers perceive negative emotions on social media, giving insights into their personal social reality. The data analysis process is highlighted below in Figure 3.1, showing the different stages of analysis and what actions were taken during the process.

Figure 3.1- Data Analysis Process



3.7 - What Data Was Collected?

Having highlighted *how* the data were collected it is important to go into detail as to *what* data was collected. On social media, both organisations and consumers can express negative emotions, with the interactive nature of social media allowing for instant interactions between consumers and companies. This study focused on the organisational use of negative emotions, with different reasons for using negative emotions explained in the next section. In addition, when organisations use and create negative emotions non-intentionally was explored.

3.7.1 - Organisational Use of Negative Emotions

Organisations have in the past used negative emotions as a marketing tool, whether that's shock (Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda, 2003), fear (Hastings, Stead and Webb, 2004) or guilt (Bozinoff and Ghingold, 1983). Using the medium of social media organisations are able to use a variety of marketing messages, allowing for the occasional use of negative emotions. This is however a relatively rare event, although its impacts when it does occur has not yet been explored in a social media setting. This study set out to explore what affects these negative emotions have on consumer perceptions when delivered via social media, focusing on the intentional organisation use of these marketing techniques.

When organisations use negative emotions there is normally a reason, a motive for the marketers in order to improve the brand image of the company. Before interviews were undertaken, three reasons commercial organisations use negative emotions were identified. First was as a way of reinforcing the brands values. This is when a

company posts a negative message in order show the brand cares and takes note of issues. This could be a pet food company posting about animal abuse or a coffee company posting about poor conditions in the country they get their supply. Sharing an anger towards an event is a method to show that the company cares about the situation and that the company's values are matched to this.

Another reason company's use negative emotions is to give a call to action, to tell their customers to take some sort of act. This could be to join a cause the company cares about or buying the company's products. A call to action may use negative emotions in order to get there point across that something is worth doing. This could be using fear or anger to highlight the importance of the action that should be undertaken.

The third reason identified is to simply persuade customers to interact with them and buy their products. This is where negative emotions are used to generate some sort of interaction with brand, to get consumers to share in anger or to feel some sort of fear from the marketing message. Organisations use negative emotions in this way in order to capture people's attention, to make their brand stand out and have consumers interact with them. These reasons for using negative emotions share similar traits, they all want to share a message with consumers that negative emotions will help them achieve. Sometimes however negative emotions can arise from posts where they are not intended.

3.7.2 - Non-Intentional

Sometimes organisations can insight negative emotions from their consumers accidentally, where otherwise positive posts are misunderstood or have a hidden meaning that causes anger or fear among consumers. This could be a joke that's not understood or poorly worded that causes offense. Also misunderstanding the people that follow the page and posting a post that is not suited to the target audience can have this effect. Receiving a negative backlash from these sort of posts and how consumers interpret this is something this study was interested in exploring. Determining a difference between consumer reaction to intentional and non-intentional is another area that needed to be explored.

CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS

The previous chapter looked at how the research was conducted and what data were collected. This chapter looks at the findings of the research that have been drawn from interviews and online observations. To begin with I look at the main reasons users go on Facebook, with motivation for consuming the medium explored. Also, as part of this is how participants use Facebook is examined, including identifying different types of users. This gives an insight into the different users of Facebook, making it possible to determine whether different types of users reacted to negative emotions differently and answer RO4. Next the number of “reactions”, “shares” and comments were looked at next, exploring in more depth the interactions people had with the posts observed. This looks to answer RO1 and shed more light on Facebook user’s activity. Next the immediate and emotional reactions of participants are explored. This looks at what people’s initial reactions were to the use of negative emotions, including any sort of emotional response they exhibited. This is related to RO2 which looks at what consumers emotional reactions were and how they interpret the posts. The following section looks at consumer outcomes and lasting opinions of the brand. This is the natural step from the previous section, looking at what consumers think of the brand after viewing the negative posts and whether it would change if they buy from the company or not. This is in response to RO3 which looks at consumers lasting opinion of negative emotions in relation to the brand. The next section brings up the issue of how there is a complexity to emotions, with both positive and negative outcomes being common. Finally, there was a contempt for marketing activities, where participants had low expectations of marketing.

4.1 – How and Why Participants Use Facebook

Here I look at both how and why interview participants use Facebook. This tells me more about their motivations, and the reasons why they use Facebook in the first place. I also explore the reasoning behind these decisions and whether this has any impact on their opinions of negative emotions in marketing. Overall, it was found that how and why a participant uses Facebook does not affect their opinion of the use of negative emotions. Different users who identified themselves as the same type were just as likely to agree as disagree with the use of negative emotions. Their opinion on the use of negative emotions was a much more internal view that was more influenced by their moral compass and experience with marketing rather than how they use social media.

4.1.1 - How Participants Use Facebook

During the interviews each participant was asked to determine which type of Facebook user they were based on the four different types set out by Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal (2015). Type 1 was *Entertainment Chasers*, Type 2 *Attention Seekers*, Type 3 *Connection Seekers* and Type 4 *Devotees*. *Entertainment Chasers* are those that use Facebook for entertainment purposes, not really posting or commenting on posts. *Attention Seekers* create a lot of content, posting updates often but are unlikely to view others pages out of boredom. *Devotees* have a very high level of involvement on Facebook, both interacting with others and creating content. These types of users feel Facebook is an important part of their lives, being able to immerse themselves in Facebook amongst Facebook

friends is a big appeal. *Connection Seekers* are motivated to connect with others, spending most of their time interacting with others rather than creating content. These were self-selected by participants, with descriptions of the characteristics of each group put together and shown to participants before the interview (see Appendix 3.3). The names of the groups were left out to try to avoid any attempt to disassociate themselves from perhaps an undesirable group. However, as with all self-selection methods, there is still the possibility of a confirmation bias where participants chose what they think is the correct answer. Table 4.1 below shows what type of user each participant identified with most:

Gender	Type of Facebook user	Preferred the Positive or Negative page?
F	1 (<i>Entertainment Chasers</i>)	Postive
F	1 (<i>Entertainment Chasers</i>)	Postive
F	1 (<i>Entertainment Chasers</i>)	Postive
F	1 (<i>Entertainment Chasers</i>)	Postive
F	1 (<i>Entertainment Chasers</i>)	Negative
F	2/3/4	Negative
F	3 (<i>Connection Seekers</i>)	Negative
F	4 (<i>Devotees</i>)	Postive
F	2 (<i>Attention Seekers</i>)	Postive
M	1 (<i>Entertainment Chasers</i>)	Postive
M	1 (<i>Entertainment Chasers</i>)	Negative
M	1 (<i>Entertainment Chasers</i>)	Negative
M	1 (<i>Entertainment Chasers</i>)	Negative
M	3 (<i>Connection Seekers</i>)	Postive
M	3 (<i>Connection Seekers</i>)	Postive
M	4 (<i>Devotees</i>)	Postive

Table 4.1 - Types of Facebook User

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Entertainment Chasers were by far the most common type, with 9 out of 16 users identifying themselves as Type 1. In a study by Brandtzæg & Heim (2011) 46% of participants came out as either sporadics or lurkers, with these groups sharing the same characteristics as Entertainment Chasers. Although that study still had a smaller percentage of participants with these characteristics it was much larger sample, meaning it was more representative of the population as a whole than this study. Next came Connection Seekers with 3, followed by Devotees with 2/3 and Attention Seekers with 1/2. Entertainment chasers were the most casual type of Facebook user, which was reflected in the description of the group (Appendix 3.3). This being the most common chosen group shows that the majority of my participants did not see themselves as heavy Facebook users. For example, CP said they were a Type 1 because:

“I do post every now and then but I do not bother with anyone else’s status updates. I just like to have a look at what’s going on really.”

This was a common occurrence amongst this group, with a key motivation being to see what others are up to and to browse through their page for news. They go on Facebook to cure boredom simply look at posts (Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015). For example BO commented how he doesn’t interact with posts:

“MD: ok so say this posts came up, perhaps you weren’t following it but it was promoted post, um what would you do? Would you interact with it at all or would you just scroll past?”

BO: ummm normally I would just scroll past but I would read these titles and I would be angry at these people who colour their pets and abuse their pets.

Umm I think even if I didn't really click on the link I think the message is already in my mind."

Uncovering these opinions during the interview stage is something that is key, meaning the fact that most users are type one does not mean that they do not use Facebook on a regular basis.

Participants from other groups were more likely to have an active social media presence. For example, MP identified as a Type 4, a devotee, and said:

"I like to see what's going on with my friends, and I like to tell people what it is like for me, what I'm doing. Erm, but yeah it has become part of my daily routine."

This participant described how they interacted with posts frequently, often creating their own posts as well as commenting on others. This highlights how social media plays an important part of these types of users' daily lives, whether it is connecting with their friends or posting about their own lives.

This study found that there was no real difference between how these different groups interpreted these posts - there was no pattern with different members of different groups having different reactions. Their opinion of negative motions was not influenced by what type of user they were, rather by their own moral compass. For example, NG and AB were both Type 1 - Entertainment Chasers who used Facebook quite casually; they were not frequent posters and mainly used the medium to relieve boredom. Whilst they shared the same Facebook habits their opinion of and reaction to negative emotions were vastly different. AB did not like them at all, feeling they were a poor way to sell a product. NG on the other hand saw no reason that

companies could not use negative emotions and felt that the page tried to connect with him. Simply how participants used Facebook offered no insight into how they would react or interact with the negative posts.

Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal (2015) highlighted how different users should be marketed to differently on social media, with *attention seekers* being engaged with easy to access material rather than trying to get interaction which you might do for connection seekers. They simply wanted content that was interesting to read and worth their time. Finding out what types of content users wanted in terms of interaction and creation levels was not an aim for this study, meaning that although I did not find any preference in regards to these factors I did find that everybody wanted something that engaged them and was interesting. Exactly how they wanted this I did not explore meaning there is opportunity for further research in this area.

4.1.2 - Reasons for Using Facebook

Multiple reasons for using Facebook arose from the interviews, with some being more common than others. Being “nosey” was one of the most frequent reasons that emerged, with AC describing why they use Facebook:

MD – That brings on the next question, why do you use Facebook?

AC – I’m a nosey Facebooker [laughs].

MD – Sort of like, see what people are up to?

AC – Yeah.

Being nosey was a common reason given, with participants feeling that when they went on Facebook they went in order to see what the people they are connected to are up to. Whether this is seeing any life events that people have or just what they are saying about what is happening to them, being nosey was a key driver behind using Facebook.

Using Facebook to stay connected with distant friends was a reason shared by Type 3 most of all. For example, MT had to say when asked why she used Facebook:

MT: Umm another reason as well sometimes I use Facebook because I have lots of good friends and they are everywhere in the world so I can stay connected with them.

Connection Seekers wanted to keep in contact with friends and those that were far away, with this being a key driver behind their use of Facebook. Facebook is an easy way to do this - you can instantly connect with someone anywhere in the world if they have an internet connection. You can also see what they are up to via Facebook posts such as pictures and status updates. This allows users to comment on life events or even just talk to them via the Facebook chat feature. Staying connected is an important motivation for Type 3.

A common reason for using Facebook for Type 1 users was simply being bored.

MD: Why do you go on it, like what's your main reason?

RC: Boredom, I guess. Yeah.

MD: Boredom? See what people are up to?

RC: Yeah literally just open it, scroll down, for three or four minutes and then I'm off again.

Facebook allowed participants to have a temporary fix for their boredom, seeing what friends were up to in their life and engaging with people's status updates. Following groups and entertainment pages means that there is a constant source of content delivered to their phone. This led into another reason for using Facebook which was in order to keep up to date with any new content that may be put up. Participants went on Facebook to find new information and content that they may find of interest. They used Facebook in short bursts, regularly checking their page rather than having prolonged sessions once or twice a day. This was a way of appeasing boredom with the new content that was being posted, highlighting how a reason for using Facebook is to simply see what new stuff is on there. For this group content that grabbed their attention stood out, they wanted to read stuff that was interesting and cured their boredom. This relates to the use of negative emotions, as Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) points out a main reason for using negative appeals in marketing is to grab the person's attention. To stand out from other forms of marketing and make the consumer remember your advert.

Another reason that emerged from the data was in order to follow the news, to find out what is going on in the world and not just with their friends. Some participants described how they followed multiple news pages, such as BBC News, and that the status updates that they posted were their main source of news. BO for example described why he used Facebook:

MD: ok so why do you go on Facebook?

BO: umm yeah I go on Facebook to check what people are doing and I follow a lot of umm like official medias alike BBC and I want to look at their articles.

MD: so you use it as like a news source?

BO: Yeah like a news source, I like to keep track.

Using Facebook for news is a different reason for using the medium, whilst it is not as efficient as going directly to a news site such as the BBC or Sky News, you have more personalisation and can see how others in the world react to news stories. It also eliminates the need to go to multiple web pages - the ability to follow multiple news outlets on Facebook means that a wider range of new stories can come up on your feed. This highlights the ease of using social media as a communication platform, where it is not just connecting with individual but with the world in general. It also shows a serious use to social media, one that is completely non-marketing related.

The reasons for using Facebook help highlight why users go on Facebook in the first place, giving an understanding of their motivations. None of these reasons was to see what their favourite brand was up to or to see what advertisements they might get. This shows how the reason for going on Facebook was unlikely to be related to companies and brands, in fact participants felt that company's posts were not what they wanted to see. They were intrusive and annoyed participants with their attempts to engage. Understanding that Facebook is a medium for connecting with friends and to see what is going on is important for brands to understand, connecting with consumers by having content that cures boredom and engages the consumer.

4.1.3 - Conclusion

How and why consumers use Facebook gives us some important considerations when considering users reactions and interaction with negative emotions. Firstly with there being no evidence of different types of users sharing opinions in regards to companies' use of negative emotions, for this study it does not play a role in our findings. The research did however have a small sample, a larger scale study looking at this specifically may be able to find statistically significant results, for this research however there was no link. This answers Research Objective 4 as this study finds that different types of users don't interact or interpret negative emotions in different ways. It's a lot more about the personality of the user rather than how they use the platform.

Secondly looking at the reasons consumers' use social media gives us insights into consumers motivations, with alleviating boredom and connecting with friends being the most common reasons given. How this impacts consumer's perceptions of negative emotions, if at all, is important to consider.

4.2 – Reactions, Shares and Comments to Negative Emotions

This section looks mainly at the number of likes, shares and comments that posts using negative emotions incite. This looks to answer research RO1 which wants to "Explore if inciting the negative emotions of anger, fear and sadness create "likes", "reactions", "shares" and comments on Facebook". First, online observations are explored, with this being the main data source for this section. Interviews are then

looked at to see what participants say they would do in regard to sharing or liking negative emotions

4.2.1 – Online Observations

Overall five different posts were found during the online observation phase of this research. They came from two different pet supplier companies, a beverage company, a publication company and an insurance company. Looking specifically at the number of “likes”, “shares”, “reactions” and “comments” of each post shows a wildly different number for each post. This is mainly due to size difference; some companies are multinational well know businesses whilst others are much smaller and much more niche.



Figure 4.1- Pet Supplier 1

– Post

Figure 4.2 - Pet Supplier 1 Comments



Figure 4.1 and 4.2 shows the number of likes, shares and comments for a post from Pet Supplier 1. This post is using both sadness and fear to get a message across to consumers regarding the dangers lilies to cats. One notable outcome is the high amount of shares this post got, with 169 people sharing this post. This is high especially when compared to the 41 people that like this post. This may be high due to the post containing important information about something that is dangerous to

cats so people are warning other users of the danger. There are quite a few comments on this post as well, more than a normal post would generate. These comments are mostly telling stories regarding lilies and whether people have them in their own homes because of cats. There are a few that just comment to say how sad it was, showing the post left people with sadness.

Figure 4.3- Beverage Company Post

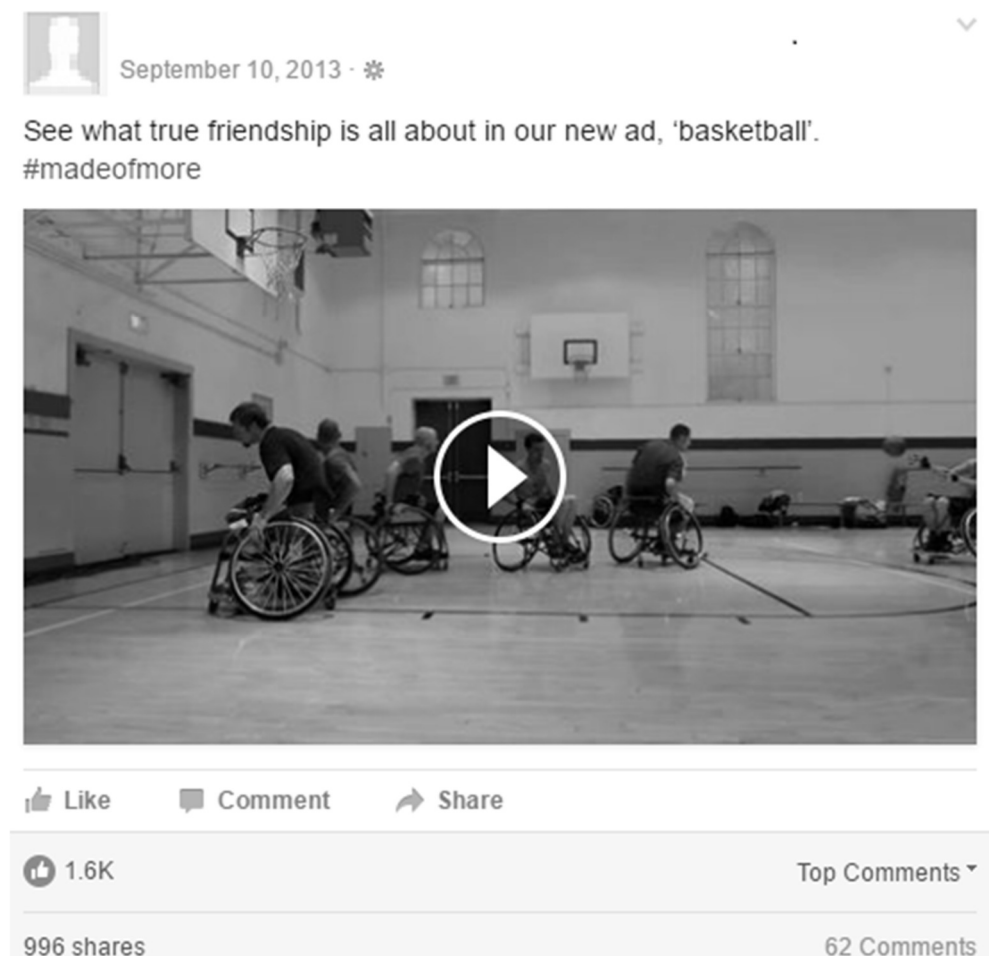


Figure 4.4- Beverage Company Comments

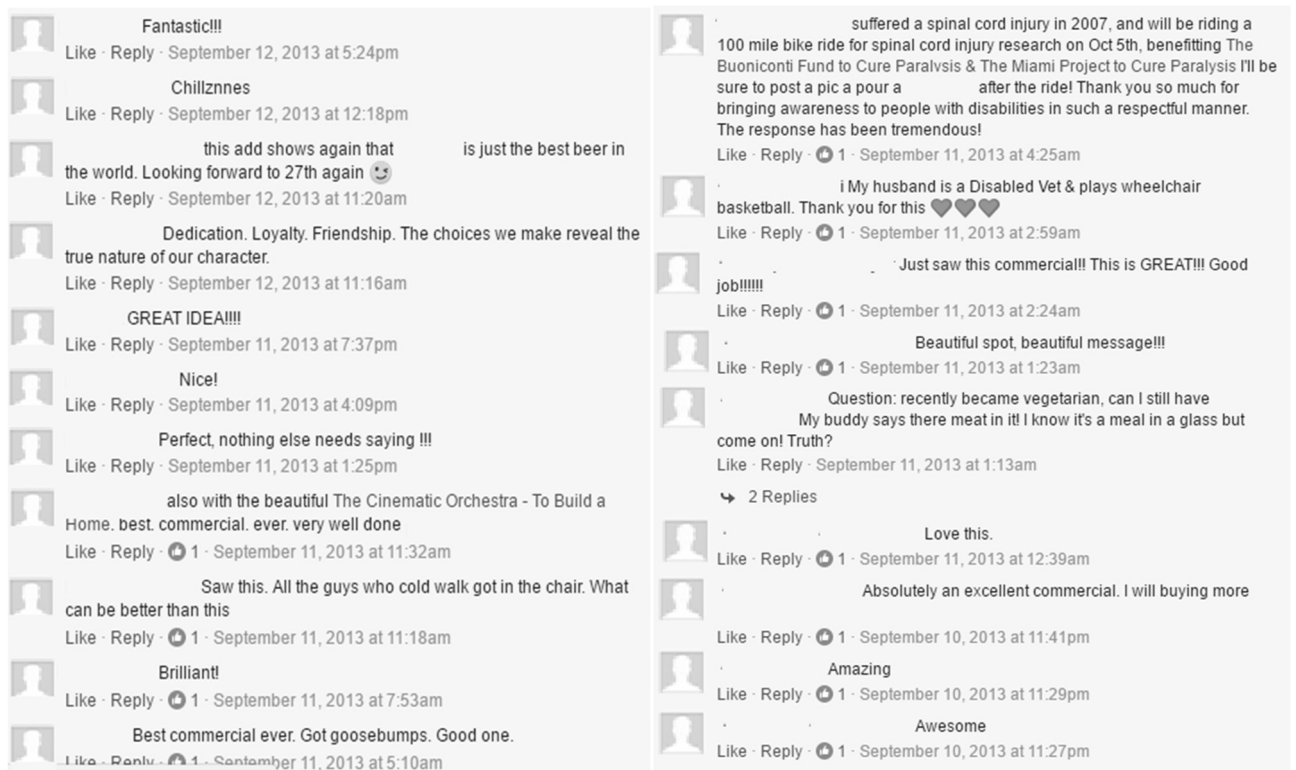
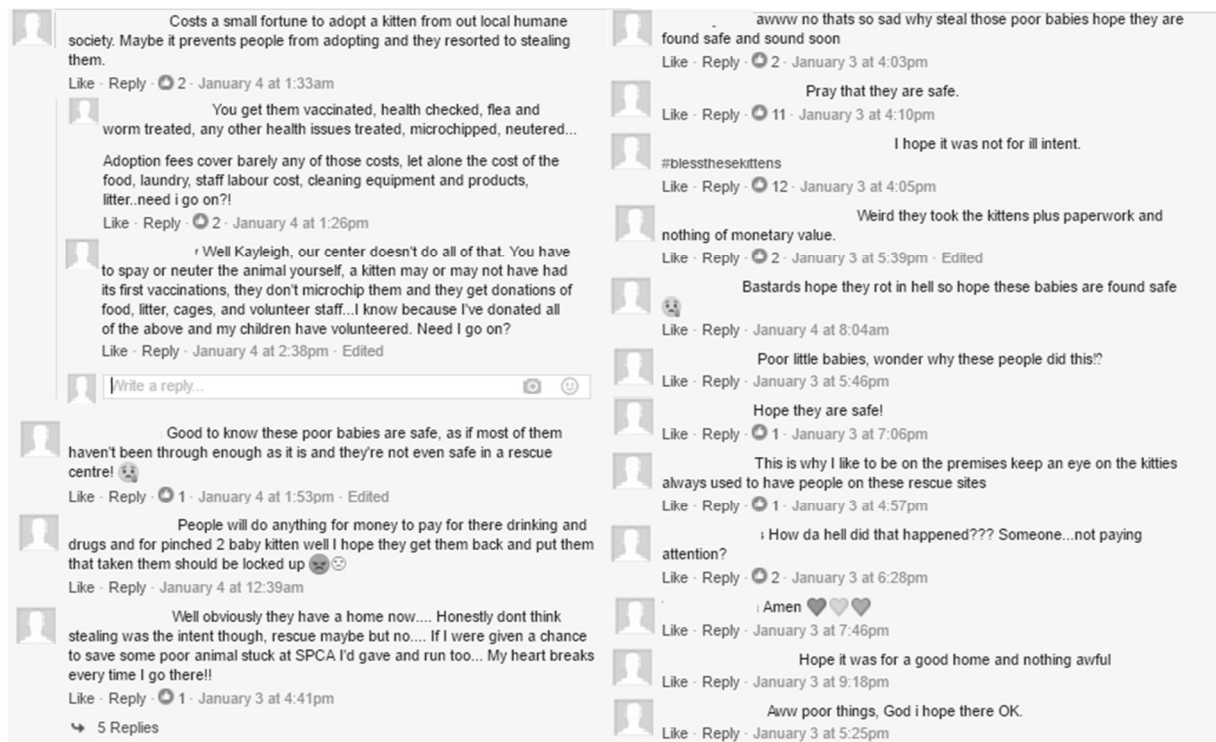


Figure 4.3 and 4.4 shows the number of likes, shares and comments for a post from a beverage company. This is a large beverage company, meaning the number of likes and shares has the potential to be high as more people like the page and see the posts. The sheer number of likes (over 1600) and shares (996) show people are interested. There is also a lot of comments that praise the content of the post. The post itself is a commercial that's designed to make consumers feel sad about the situation that the people are in but to also give a positive message about friendship. This works well in making people initially sad but then come away from the video happy.

Figure 4.5- Publication Post



Figure 4.6- Publication Comments



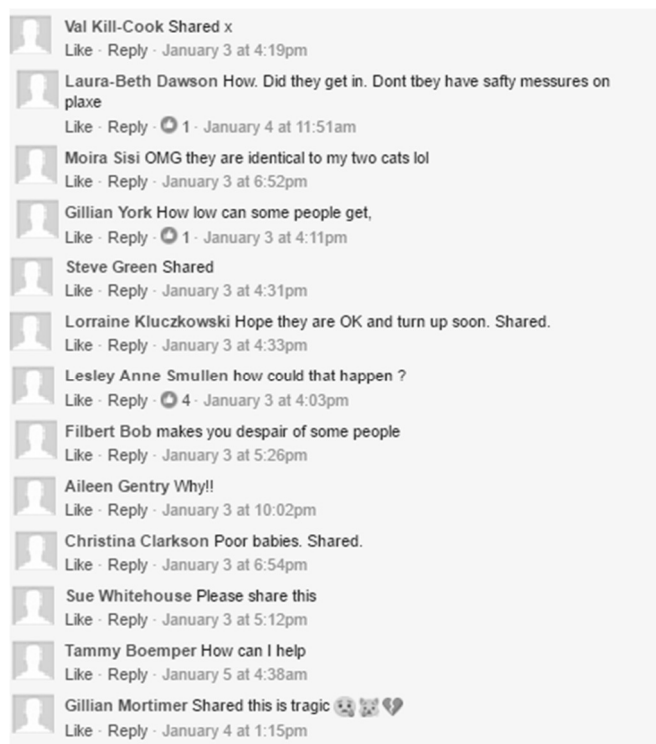


Figure 4.5 and 4.6 are the post and comments for a pet Publication company. A key feature here compared to the other posts is that “reactions” are shown, with this post being created after the Facebook update enabling these. These “reactions” show that this post makes people “Sad” and “Angry”. There is 607 “reactions” and 301 “shares” meaning that a lot of people cared about these posts. The post content specifically asked for helped in finding two stolen kittens, something that is quite sad to a lot of people. Here by making people sad they are appearing as an altruistic company, the number of comments saying they will help or despairing that this happened shows that the source of anger and sadness is not aimed at the company

Figure 4.7 - Pet Supplier 2 Post

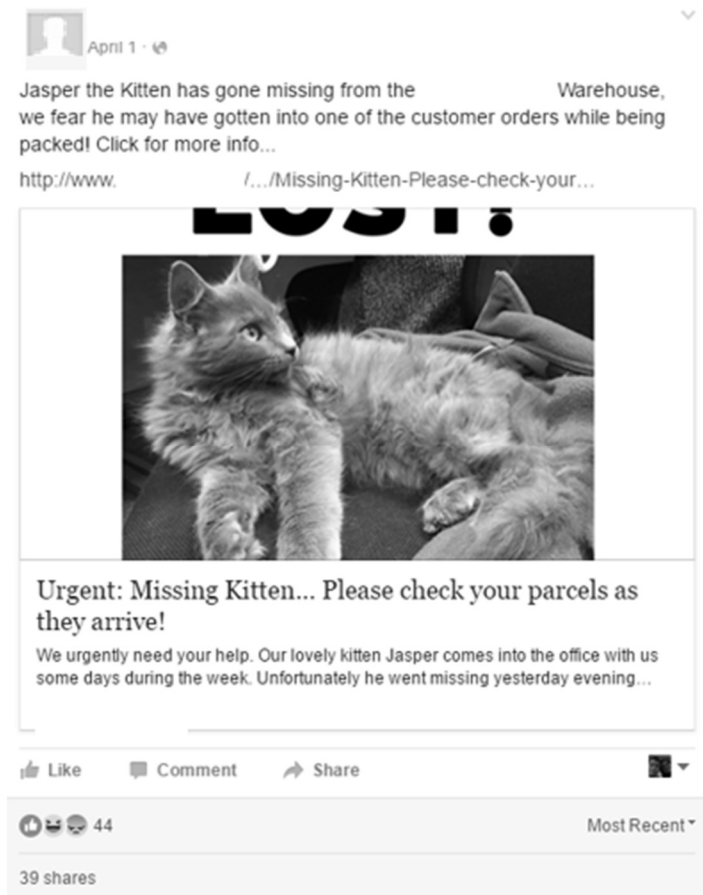


Figure 4.8 - Pet Supplier 2 Comments

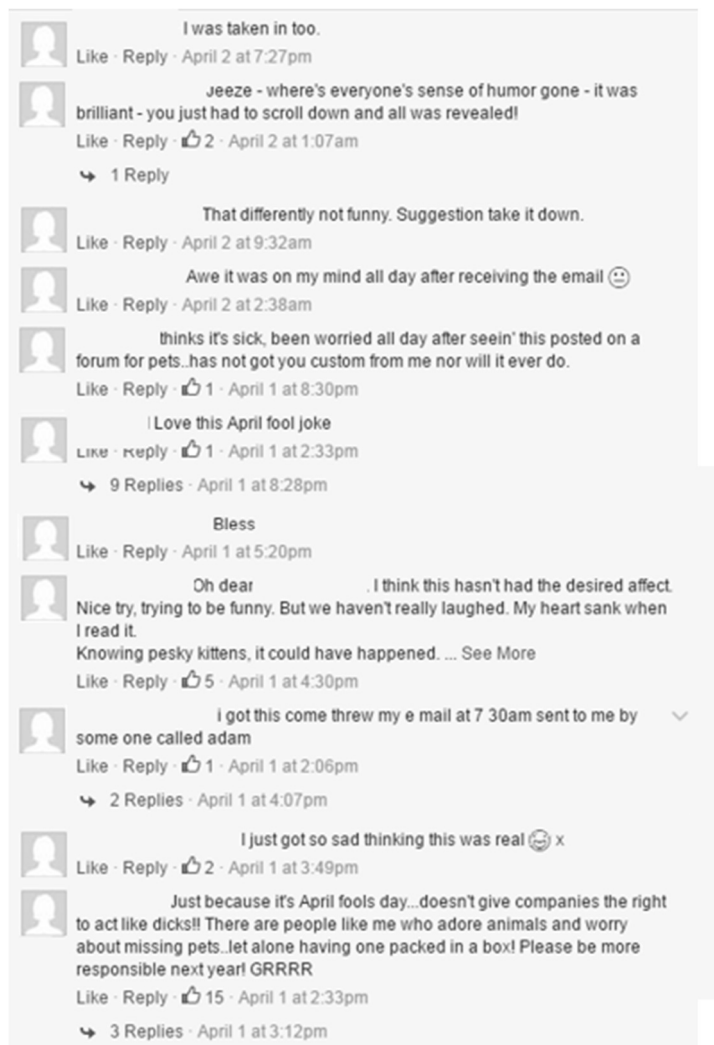




Figure 4.7 and 4.8 show the post of Pet Supplier 2. This company is smaller than other companies listed above meaning the number of “likes” and “shares” reflect this. There are 44 “reactions” and 39 “shares” as well as quite a few comments. These “Reactions” include both laughing and sad faces, with people perceiving the post differently. This post was an April fool’s joke, saying that a cat had got stuck in parcel sent out to customers. This caused concern amongst people who didn’t understand it was a joke, with these people feeling sad and then angry when they realise it’s a joke.

Figure 4.9 - Insurance Company Post

 February 2, 2015 · 🌐

Our journey from concept to the Super Bowl: starting a fierce conversation to make children safe. CNNMoney shares:



...meant to be jarring

CNN went behind the scenes as
Bowl ad featuring a dead child talking to the camera.

produced a jarring Super


MONEY.CNN.COM | BY BRIAN STELTER

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share


👍 641

223 shares


Figure 4.10 - Insurance Company Comments

 Now, they Meant for it to be jarring?!!?! How about a slap in the face, followed by a punch to the stomach for those of us who have lost a child??? How insanely cruel is it to remind us of all the things we will miss with our child? How do you take ... See More


Like · Reply · 11 · February 4, 2015 at 6:11pm

 Lmao. Paying your employees to defend the nationwide name! It is painfully obvious.


Like · Reply · 5 · February 4, 2015 at 6:26pm

 With this along with firing a breastfeeding mother, it is clear that Nationwide does not like kids.


Like · Reply · 4 · February 4, 2015 at 6:38pm

 What an awful slap in the face commercial to parents who have lost children. Bravo, nationwide! You did it again. The people in your advertising department should be fired, not breastfeeding mothers.


Like · Reply · 10 · February 4, 2015 at 6:38pm

 You can post all the crap you want to justify your stupidity. You are a bunch of tone deaf, heartless ghouls. It would be nice if you acknowledge your poor judgement. But no, you turn on the PR machine to explain that it was intentional. You might want to rethink your strategy.


Like · Reply · 9 · February 4, 2015 at 7:04pm

 Any redemptive light found within this commercial by anyone other than a parent who's own child died in one of the ways portrayed within is invalid and doesn't hold enough value to deserve to be heard at all.


Like · Reply · 1 · February 4, 2015 at 8:43pm

 Every single thing about this ad is disgustingly evil and cruelty based. It merely alludes to death of - it isn't even a teaching prevention tool. It is 110% shock and horror based - the fact that they chose to air it during the Super Bowl cements the undeniable fact that shock factor at the expense of dishonored Heaven kids and their aching for them families is what and all they were after.


Like · Reply · 7 · February 4, 2015 at 8:45pm

 Thanks for reminding me that I am a parent of a dead child. I mean because wow, for a second there I had forgotten about all those things that he won't be able to do. As you aired your ridiculous commercial, my heart broke and as my eyes filled with tears, those around me could've cared less about your message. Your marketing department should be fired and I pray none of them ever have to cope with a dead child.


Like · Reply · 15 · February 4, 2015 at 8:55pm

 and the after effects of "starting a conversation with" are even worse. Today while in the checkout line getting groceries the cashier and person ahead of me are laughing over the commercial saying "who wants to hear and talk about a dead kid" -- I do, that's my little boy.


"Thanks" for making this already cold world even more of a heartless hell of a place for us to soul ache in, Nationwide.

 Tasteless and out of place!!! I am the mother of a dead child ...do you think the insurance money meant anything? Hell no. Save your shocking crap for adult hours when there are no kids in the room and wr have control of the remote!!!


Like · Reply · 9 · February 4, 2015 at 9:36pm

 Agh I just read through these last few posts, all mom's with dead children.. I hate this club...and no, Nationwide, nothing you say can make it better.


Like · Reply · 8 · February 4, 2015 at 9:38pm

 Shame on you for this inappropriate and manipulative ad, and for firing a breastfeeding mother.


Like · Reply · 4 · February 4, 2015 at 9:43pm

 Your moral compass is significantly skewed.... You must hate children and families by your actions

Like · Reply · 4 · February 4, 2015 at 9:59pm

 Called and left a message yesterday in your Media Center and no return call today. Left another message today...anyone want to guess whether or not the morons call me back?

Like · Reply · 2 · February 4, 2015 at 10:07pm

 I had my small children with me while we watched the Super Bowl. Your ad was horrifying and traumatizing. What is wrong with you? You are out of touch and heartless. Obviously none of you have children or have experienced loss. I will remember your ad so that I will remember to NEVER use you and bad mouth you every chance I get. Shame on you.

Like · Reply · 8 · February 4, 2015 at 11:48pm

Figure 4.9 and 4.10 show the post for the insurance company and the comments. This post had 641 “likes” and 223 “shares”, with a lot of comments that were often quite detailed and expressive. This post was a link to an article defending the companies use of negative emotions in advert that they posted. The advert involved a child talking about how they would never do things as it turns out they had died after an accident in their home. A lot of comments were very emotive and personal, with experiences about losing a child. People felt that the company was trying to make them fearful or guilty. It created buzz and this post had a lot more activity than the company’s other posts.

Something that all these posts have in common is a high number of “shares” in proportion to the number of “likes”, people think that these posts are worthy of sharing on their own Facebook page. This be because they thought the post was good, they thought it was sad or they were concerned and were trying to raise awareness. The number of comments were also much higher, with people much more likely to comment. The number of “likes” was also quite high for all of these posts, although not much more than regular posts.

4.2.2 - Interviews

During the interviews some participants talked about whether they were more or less likely to interact with posts that were negative. Some participants said they would, such as NG:

NG: I would be more likely to click on this page because it has used emotions to engage me.

NG thought that it was more engaging to use negative emotions, that it captured his attention. Others thought that they would use the “reactions” to get their thoughts across such as SG:

MD: Well would you react to it?

SG: Yeah I'd put a sad face.

These comments show that the negative posts do cause people to take more notice and interact with the post. Of course here participants were asked what they would do, there is ever chance that when they are in a situation where a post like this comes up that they simply scroll past it. If their word is relied upon however then there is strong evidence that using emotion means it catches the participants eye and makes them more likely to have an interaction with the post.

4.2.3 – Conclusion

Online Observations and Interviews show that the number of “reactions”, “shares” and “comments” are high for posts that use negative emotions. The online observations showed that posts that used negative emotions or tried to incite them often had many “shares”. This was often due to the post having content that was worthy of sharing. For example, one was asking for information regarding stolen kittens, with people that view this post sharing in order to get the word out. The “reactions” were also very high, with lots of posts having “angry” or “sad” reactions. Some posts just had “likes”, with these being older than the “reaction” update. These likes still show that people are interacting with the post and making their voice heard. Of course, there was also lots of “comments” with every post having quite a few.

These were often quite emotive if people came away feeling angry or sad, showing that people want to get their message across especially if it made them feel strong emotions.

Interviews were a lot lighter in talking about what sort of action the participant would take, although some did still mention how the negative post would make them more likely to interact with the post. The fact that the online observation posts generated a lot of interactions as well as participants of the interviews saying they would interact with post shows that for RO1 that negative posts do generate more interactions.

4.3 – Immediate and Emotional Responses to Negative Emotions

This section will look at the immediate and emotional responses of people, both from Interviews and online observations. This looks to find out what sort of emotions these negative posts incite and how consumers interpret the messages put across, answering RO2. This section first looks at the positive responses from participants when faced with negative responses, including how the post immediately grabbed their attention and helped establish an emotion connection to the post and company. Then the adverse responses to the use of negative emotions are looked at, including emotional reactions. Also what participants thought the intention of the content is explored.

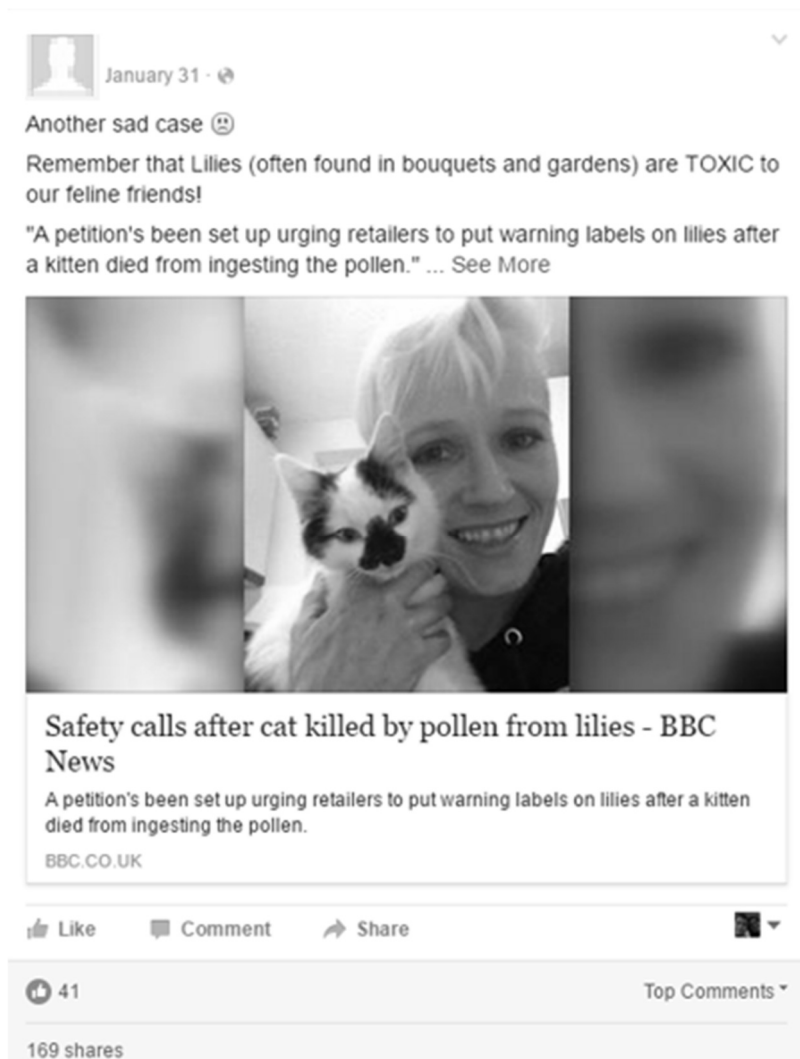
4.3.1 - Attention Grabbing

Participants were often more drawn to the negative posts; they remembered the content and took more notice of it, even when the outcome of this was of a negative

nature. They were more likely to click on the link and remember the post than the positive page. This clearly demonstrates how negative emotions grab attention by having content that stands. This in turn means such posts have more comments and interactions than their positive counterparts.

Online observations clearly show that negative emotions attract likes, comments, and shares, as seen below. They show that these sort of posts are interacted with by consumers. In this instance the shock value of these posts are achieving their goals - they are getting consumers interacting with the posts. Figure 4.1 from a Pet Supplies company show the amount of interaction that a post using sad emotions can gain.

Figure 4.1- Pet Supplier 1 - Post



The number of shares was significant, with this being much higher than any other post on their Facebook page. Using the emotion of sad meant that consumers stopped and looked at the post, with the shares resulting from them wanting to get the message of the post out there amongst their Facebook friends. Also the number of likes was quite high for a post on this Facebook page, showing more people took an active interest in this post. This was a common theme amongst all the negative posts, regardless of the tone of the comments and whether consumers actually had a positive opinion. Likes and shares were often higher on posts where there was a call to action or where the company was raising attention to a problem, such as in this

case where they were raising the issue to lilies being toxic to cats. Comments were more frequent on any type of negative post, with these varying in nature depending on the emotions used in the post.

The interviews also showed how the posts grab your attention, with many participants feeling that the negative posts stood out when compared to the positive posts. This was the case even when participants did not like the content. For example AB did not like the use of negative emotions; he did however feel the negative page was more attention grabbing:

MD: ok, so which page do you think is better at grabbing your attention?

AB: umm I'd say the negative one, it is kind of like reading the news you tend to, the newsreaders tend to pick negative stories as they're the ones that stick in your head the most. Whereas this nothing particular stands out, it is all very nice but again none of it has any sticking value. The most interesting part about it is probably the top ten care tips part but you know nothing really stands out other than that.

This was a common response to the negative page, with other participants saying similar things. This idea that the negative posts stood out and made you click on the links shows that there is a good reason organisations use these sort of techniques. During the interviews participants explained how they would interact with the pages they were shown, with one even going as far as to interact with a post during the interview. The participant used the reaction button of "sad" to express their feelings regarding the post on the negative page that tried to incite sadness and anger. Whilst this is telling of the emotions they felt at the time it is difficult to tell if they would have

done this in a real situation. Participants were asked about how they would interact with the different pages they were shown, both the page using negative emotions and the one using positive. These interactions ranged from highly active responses that can be both positive (sharing) and negative (reporting the post to Facebook) to very passive interactions that are not really interactions at all (scrolling past). This study found that interactions with the positive page were very passive, with participants more likely to click on the link or even just scroll past. For the negative page interactions were a lot more common, although they were both positive (sharing) and negative (reporting) interactions. This illustrates that consumers are more engaged by the negative posts, that they were much more likely to click the links or do something on the page than on a positive one.

For the negative page the most common interactions amongst participants was clicking and reading the links. For example, BO said:

MD: ok so say this posts came up, perhaps you were not following it but it was promoted post, um what would you do? Would you interact with it at all or would you just scroll past?

BO: ummm normally I would just scroll past but I would read these titles and I would be angry at these people who colour their pets and abuse their pets.

This shows that the post has grabbed his attention, it stood out amongst the countless other posts that they would normally “scroll past”. This was a common occurrence, there were more interactions as participants felt that post was more interesting and something they wanted to read more about. Interactions were both positive and negative for the negative page, meaning that whilst the page stood out

participants did not always interact in a positive fashion. Rather than just clicking the links or scrolling past participants were more likely to share or like the negative posts. They were also much more likely to report the post or actively avoid it, something that was not really encountered with the positive page.

One thing that emerged from the interviews was the outcomes that came from viewing the positive and negative Facebook pages. These outcomes show how the negative page grabbed participants' attention, feeling that the page sticks in their mind. For the negative page, these outcomes were again both good and bad, with those that liked the page having positive outcomes and those that did not often having negative outcomes. It is a page that participants' take notice of, where you remember the posts due to the shock value. For example, DM said:

MD – So what impact does that have on your opinion of the company?

DM – I think its maybe that they want to grab your attention a bit more obviously and that they obviously know a bit more, how to catch the person's attention because I think you'd probably take a bit more notice of that, of that company.

This would be an outcome that the negative page desires; to stick in the mind of the consumer and have their post interacted with. Participants said this about the negative page regardless of other outcomes, it was noticed by those that were positively affected and negatively affected. Just grabbing attention was not enough for some participants, with negative outcomes arising from the use of these types of emotions. Participants also felt that this was an intention of the page, which the

purpose of the page and the posts it used was to grab attention. People also thought the positive page was there to grab your attention but more thought it was the negative page's main purpose. Participants felt that they found the content more engaging due to the way it grabbed their attention. Attention grabbing was mentioned by both those who thought the page had good intentions as well as those who did not like the page, who felt the intention was to guilt consumers. This shows how consumers are understanding of marketing techniques and can recognise the tactics companies are using to try and engage with them.

This attention grabbing aspect of negative emotions is commonly seen as one of the main benefits of using negative emotion and shock advertising within marketing. This supports the findings of both Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) and Parry et al (2013), who found that shock advertising grabbed people's attention. This study highlights that whilst it does grab attention, the outcome of using these negative emotions is not normally positive. Grabbing people's attention may be good for getting people to click on the links or read the posts, but the effects these have on consumer's perceptions of the brand is an issue. Even though the consumer's attention has been caught, they then often dislike what they read, feeling negative emotions towards the post and consequently the brand as well. This is explored later in the chapter, with how consumers feel once the post has grabbed their attention being discussed.

4.3.2 - Emotional Connection

During observations I could see that the use of negative emotions in some cases

made consumers care about the company's message. There was an emotional connection between the consumer and organisation, often with the consumer praising the message that is being put across. In this case a beverage company is sharing an advert that uses sadness to engage its audience, with a "feel good" moment at the end to give it a positive spin (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2- Beverage Company Post

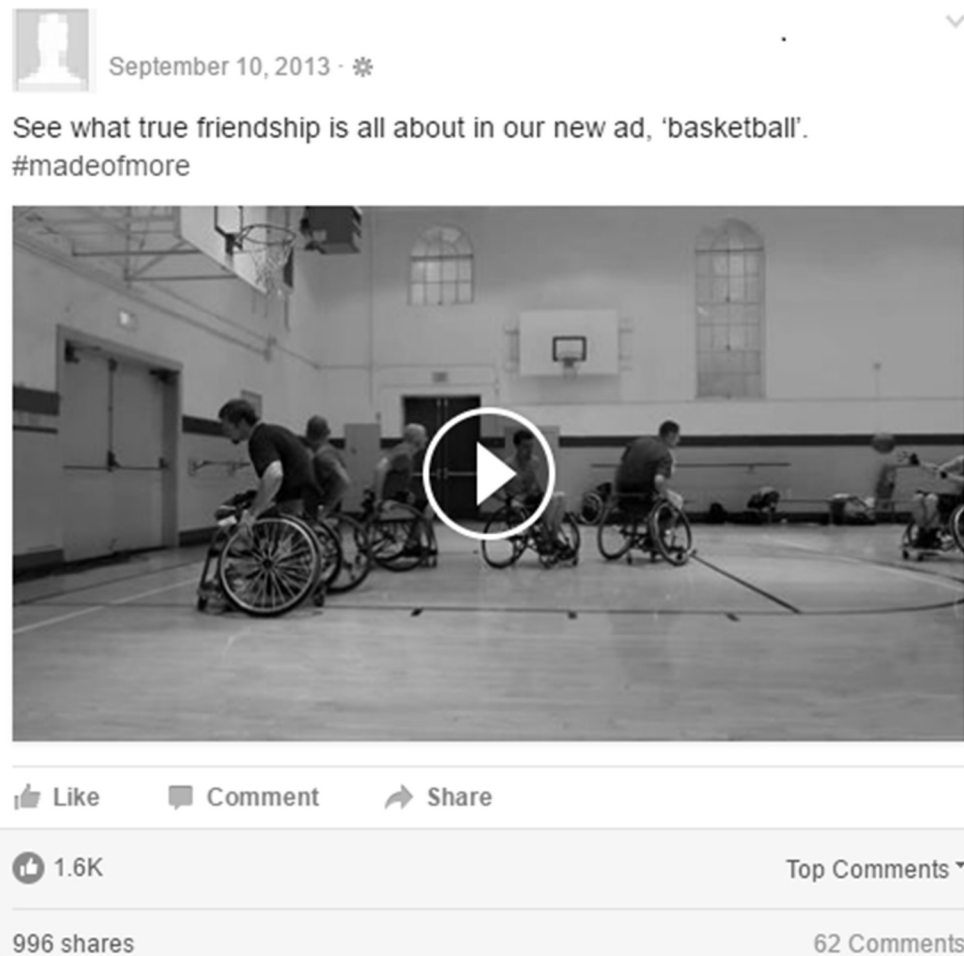
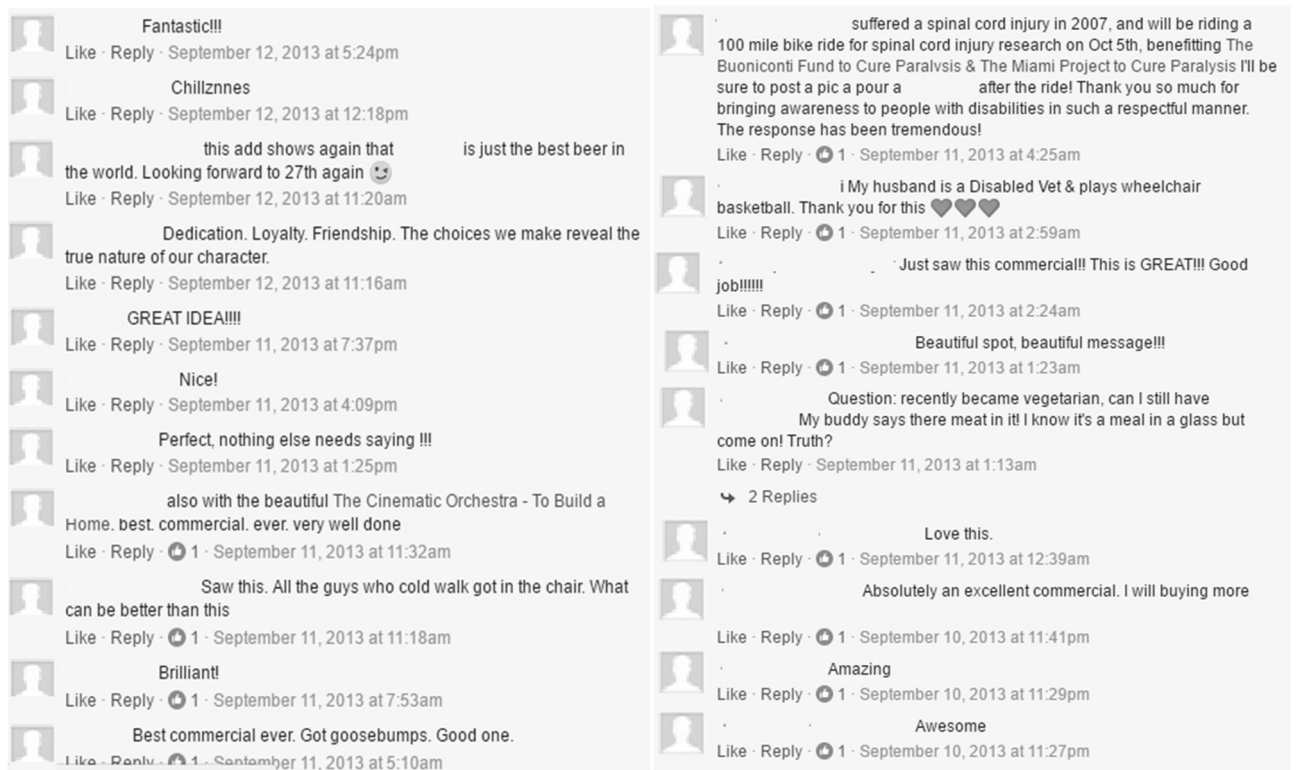


Figure 4.2 was a post to promote the company's latest advert, a video where sadness was used as an emotional appeal. It involved a group playing wheelchair basketball, then at the end everyone gets apart from the one friend who is permanently in the wheelchair. The marketing message was showing the power of friendship, tapping into people's emotions to make them care about the people within the advert. The post received over 1.6k likes, 999 shares and over 60 comments. This was a high amount of likes and shares, especially in comparison to the number of comments. The shares show that consumers are impressed by the advert, even though it tries to play on their emotions. They want to share it with their friends group which shows just how much of an impact it has on those that view the post. The comments also highlight what consumers think about the post:

Figure 4.3- Beverage Company Comments



These comments clearly show how overwhelmingly positive the reaction to this post was. Consumers felt that the post was “beautiful” and “brilliant”, showing just how much they liked these posts. Some comments are emotional responses, connecting on a personal level with those who are or know someone who is in a wheelchair. It showed the brand in a positive light, as one that cares about those with disabilities. It shows the power of very subtle negative emotions that are tinged with positive outcomes, creating sadness that inevitably has a positive resolution can be very powerful. Other emotions apart from sadness may not have worked in this situation, with sadness being unique in that it opens people up, allowing them to feel other positive emotions whilst also being sad. The medium also played a large part in this, the fact it was a video allowed for a story to be told. Social media allows for this, with a variety of text and video based posts. This would be more difficult to achieve using

just text, getting that positive outcome is crucial in order for it to succeed.

During the interviews this was a benefit that was picked up by some of the participants, although not as common as the posts grabbing attention. Participants felt that the negative social media posts felt more “human”, that they were engaging on an emotional level. They made them feel the company cared, that they were trying to do some good by raising awareness regarding issues they care about such as animal abuse. BO felt that he had a connection the negative page:

BO: I feel more connected to this one, they have more emotion on this one compared to the other one. The other one was just like cute puppy stuff whilst this one yeah as more emotional connection.

The content used was engaging, it made participants read the articles, made them take something away from the page that they did not get from the positive page they were shown. They remembered the page and had an emotional response to the content. This emotional connection tells me that for some negative emotions are the way to form a bond with the consumer, to make them consider the brand as a company that cares about its customers and the issues in the world.

The outcomes that participants took away from the negative page highlight the emotional connection that the use of negative emotions instilled. There were those that had positive outcome from the negative page during interviews, with a surprisingly high amount of participants either getting solely positive outcomes or both negative and positive. Some participants felt that the page was useful and informative, that if it had not posted then they would not have known about the issues talked about. They also felt that the page may have an influence on pet owner

behaviours, such as taking care of pets better and getting their dog microchipped.

BO mentioned for example:

MD: ok, so why do you think it is fair for them do you think?

BO: I think selling their products cannot be their only purpose and one of the other purpose could be to raise attention to look after pets more, to love more your pets.

Other participants also said they would be more likely to buy from the company due to the negative page, having a greater emotional connection to the brand. This emotional connection was due to the nature of the posts, it made participants feel sadness. Interestingly sadness was the emotion that had the most positive effect on participants; it made them care about the content and in turn about the company. MT highlights how the emotional connection draws her in and helps her get an understanding of business.

MT: I like this page more (Negative page) because it has more emotional connection, it has more content and I think a lot of the posts I can understand like what is your mission what is your mind set of the business.

Indeed this emotional connection plays a key role when discussing the positive outcomes of using negative emotions on social media. Some participants came away with a positive opinion of the brand. The use of sadness was key here, with this building the emotional connection that makes this page desirable to some

consumers. This backs up Roozen (2013) who found that sad appeals were preferred by participants when compared to warm appeals. Sadness here led to greater recognition and recall, showing that the sad messages stick with you. This is supported by our study; these types of messages are mentioned by participants as something that will stick with them.

It should be noted that whilst this benefit is applicable to some people, for others this was simply not the case. Also there was only an emotional connection when participants felt the posts were sincere and that the company actually cared, in this case issues relating to the treatment of animals from a company that is a pet food supplier. For other industries or for where the use of negative emotions does not reflect the brand trying to care about an issue, the consumer's responses may be wildly different.

It is important to note how these benefits of using negative emotions are on the surface very helpful. They make content stand out and draw consumers in with engaging material. There are however more complex downsides, which in part override the effectiveness of these techniques. Attention grabbing, emotional connection and brand altruism may be what some participants take away from them but for others it is a very different story. Even those that may have found the content engaging can go on to end up with a negative opinion of the brand.

4.3.3 – Aversion to Negativity

Above it can be seen that there are positive aspects to using negative emotions, with the posts created for this study having a variety of positive effects. This was however

not the only effect they had on participants, with many coming away with a negative view of the brand and its use of negative emotions. I found that these consumers have an aversion to negativity from companies on Facebook, a large proportion did not like the negativity and would avoid or react badly to its use in social media posts. This came across very obviously in comments from participants as well as in subtler indicators that they did not like it, such as comments about the nature of the posts and indicators about what they felt about the company. There were several different factors that really showed participant's dislike of the use of negative emotions in this way. These included; what they felt was their emotional reaction to the content, when they interacted negatively with the content and the perceived intention of the content, and the negative outcomes participants took away from the negative page. These will be explored below in order to understand what shaped a participant's reaction to the content, from emotional reaction to how they perceived the message that was being put across.

4.3.4 – Negative Emotional Reaction

When looking at the observational data it can be seen that there were strong emotional reactions to negative posts. Consumer posted after reacting to the posts, making the reactions very raw and passionate. This is highlighted in Figures 4.7 and 4.8 below:

Figure 4.7 - Pet Supplier 2 Post

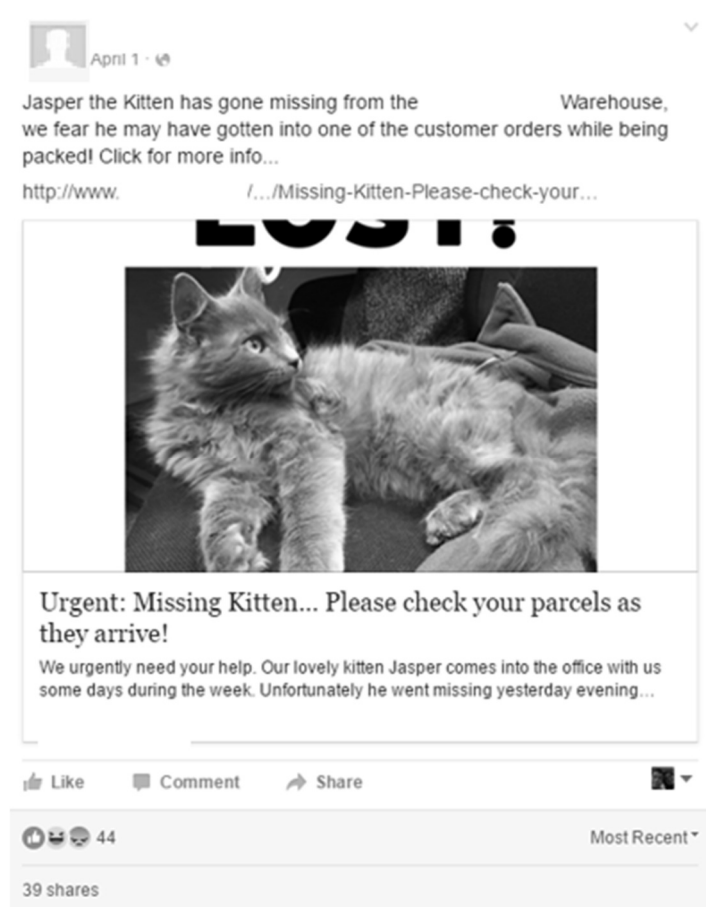


Figure 4.8 - Pet Supplier 2 Comments

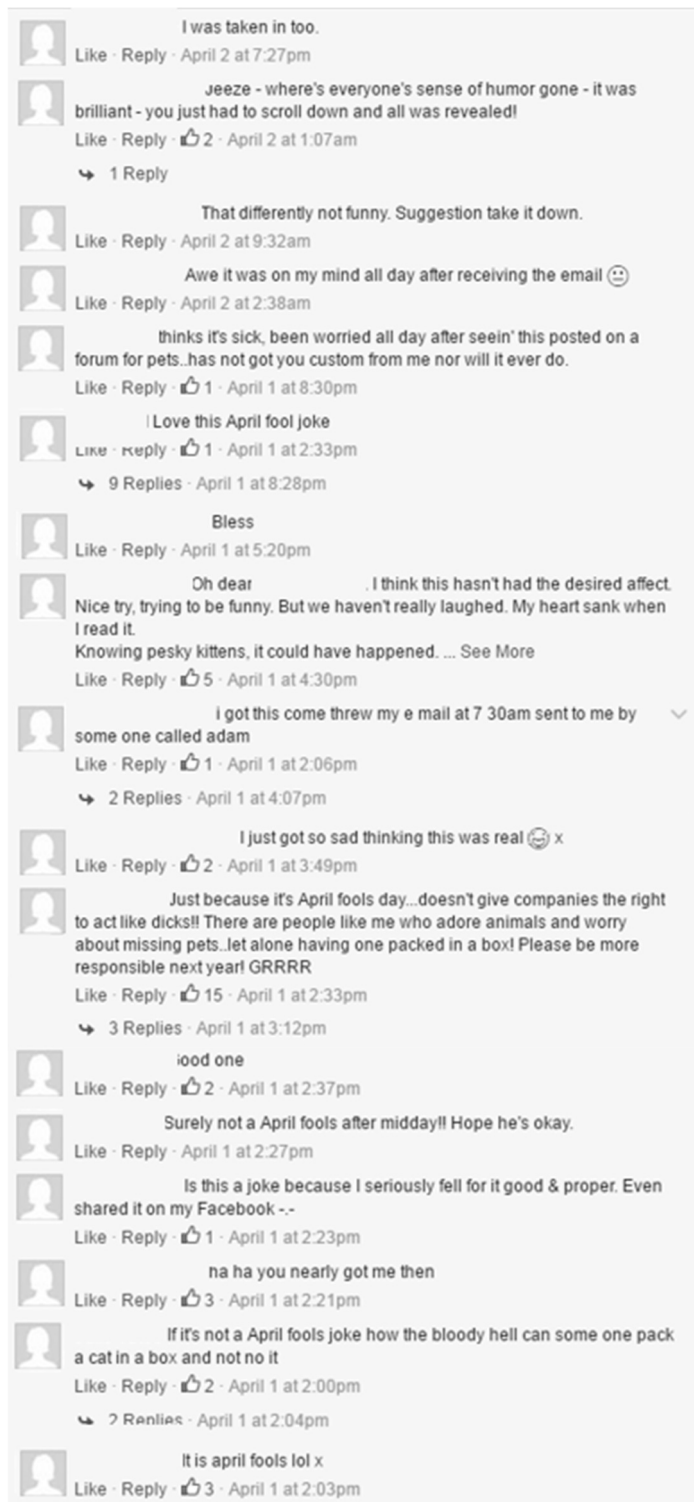


Figure 4.8 shows how consumers can have a powerful negative emotional reaction to

content on social media. The post describes how the company cat has gone missing and that customers should check in their deliveries for the cat. It was an April Fool's Day joke, but many customers did not see the funny side. There was a genuine concern for this animal, with consumers relating the post back to incidents in their own life or their own pets. The "reactions" to this post shows how some customers had an angry reaction. These included; 31 were "likes", 8 "haha", 4 "angry" and 1 "sad". These reactions give a glimpse into what people thought of the post, showing that some had negative reactions. The comments however are where the real backlash is felt, with one consumer even going as far as saying they would never use the company again. Whilst there are positive and neutral responses, having this strong negative emotional backlash is not desirable for the company as it damages the brand in the opinion of those that saw the post in a negative light. This links back to Heath and Heath (2008) who found that negative opinions of marketing often come from feeling deceived by companies. This is reflected here, many of the comments feel betrayed by the company and think the post is wildly inappropriate. One post says *"thinks it's sick, been worried all day after seein this posted on a fourm for pets..has not got you custom from me nor will it ever do"*. This sums up the betrayal that they feel and will only give them a negative view of marketing.

The way in which participants reacted emotionally to the use of negative emotions can tell us a lot about how they think and feel. The negative page received some strong emotional reactions from some participants, while from others the reaction was quite neutral. Some of the strongest and most common reactions to the negative post was "that's horrible" and "that makes me sad". For example, AC said both:

MD: Like how does that make you feel?

AC - Erm, made me pretty sad, yeah, it made me pretty sad like, the cat one, and then, yeah it made me really sad!

And

AC – Ok [Looking at page] Awww. That's horrible. Oh no. Oh my... wait I want to read them first... That's the law now isn't it get your dog microchipped? Ok, let's have a look at the... I think I've seen this one before. Ok.

This sort of emotional reaction was very common, with other participants expressing an initial negative reaction to a post on the negative page in some form or another. Comments such as, 'off-putting', 'makes me angry', 'a bit grisly' and 'I do not want to read about it' were common. This highlights how consumers can be put off by the use of negative emotions; this initial emotional response has an influence on opinions later on. Having a negative emotional reaction to the content puts the brand in a poor position, the consumer is immediately wondering whether they want to do business with this company. Another aspect from this that arose was a gender bias, with females more likely to have a negative emotional reaction than males. This could be due to range of factors, with the most likely being that the females amongst the participants cared more about the wellbeing of pets. Males on the other hand did not really make their emotional opinion known, staying impassive when looking at the posts. A male interviewer may have been a factor in this, with males perhaps unwilling to show emotion openly amongst another person. Indeed, this idea that females were more influenced by emotional appeals is back up by Wang (2008), who

found that women were more receptive to sad emotional appeals than men. They had a stronger emotional reaction, with there being a clear gender bias within their study.

4.3.2 – Negative Interactions

There were some more extreme negative interactions with the negative posts. For example, MP said that they would report the posts:

MD: Ok, so if you saw that, say you saw that one, how would...

MP: I'd stop at that, I'd go off it.

MD: You'd go off it?

MP: Yeah.

MD: If it came up on your Facebook ...

MP: I'd report it.

Having this sort of interaction was uncommon, although it does show the potential for these negative posts to upset individuals. This backs up Brennan and Binney's (2010) study which found that when presented with fear appeals participants were more likely to adapt self-protection measures. These include getting angry with the use of fear and not listening to the actual message. The above is a very good example of this in action, MP gets angry at the use of negative emotions, refusing to take them in and her immediate response is to take action. Taking this stance reduces the effectiveness of using negative emotions, it means participants don't take a positive message away and think negatively of the brand.

Some participants would not go as far as reporting but they would however actively avoid the page, ignoring or hiding the posts if they came up on their Facebook page. For example, AB felt they would just ignore the negative posts:

MD: ok, so say you saw that cat post on Facebook what would you do? Would you do anything?

AB: Nah id just ignore it.

There were other participants that, whilst they did not go out of their way to criticise the posts and its contents, they did indicate they would prefer not to see it on their Facebook page

These strong reactions to negative content clearly show that participants do not want to see them on their Facebook page, they would not usually interact and if they did not it would more likely be in a negative way, such as reporting the post. This backs up Urwin's (2014) study that found that younger generations were finding shock advertising to be dull and unpleasant, with the benefits being minimal. The participants of this study were between 18-33, meaning they fall within the ages studied by Urwin (2014). Indeed, participants within this study often found the negative emotions unpleasant, something they wanted to and could easily avoid on social media.

4.3.4 – Conclusion

This section shows the immediate and emotional reactions that participants had, as well as the comments showing emotional responses from online observations. The fact that there was both positive and negative immediate reactions show how complex and even polarizing the use of negative emotions is. Some thought the negativity brought them closer to the company, made them feel a connection. They also thought that it would make them interact with the post as it grabbed their attention. Indeed, these people had positive emotions from the presence of negative emotions. This is similar to Goldsmith, Cho and Dhar (2012) who found guilt enhanced pleasure in consumption experiences. They almost got job in seeing the negative posts, it made them more interested and they didn't direct any of the sadness or ill will they had to the company.

Alternatively, there was the opposite reaction from some who immediately felt negative emotion and didn't want to see the post at all. This ranged from strongly feeling sad or angry and directing this at the company to simply ignoring the company and not looking into detail at the post as it makes them upset. Looking at RO2 we can say that the research has gained an insight into how consumers interpret the messages put across and the emotional reactions. It's a very polarising reaction, there was not simply one-way people responded. This was surprising and shows that the way people process marketing messages is very subjective.

4.4 – Consumer Outcomes and Lasting Opinions

This section looks specifically at the outcomes that consumers have after viewing posts with negative emotions. This includes online observations as these can be garnered from the comments on the posts. Interviews as well are looked at as here participants talk about what they would feel about a company that employs these methods. This Section is linked to RO3 which looks at consumer outcomes and lasting opinion of the brand

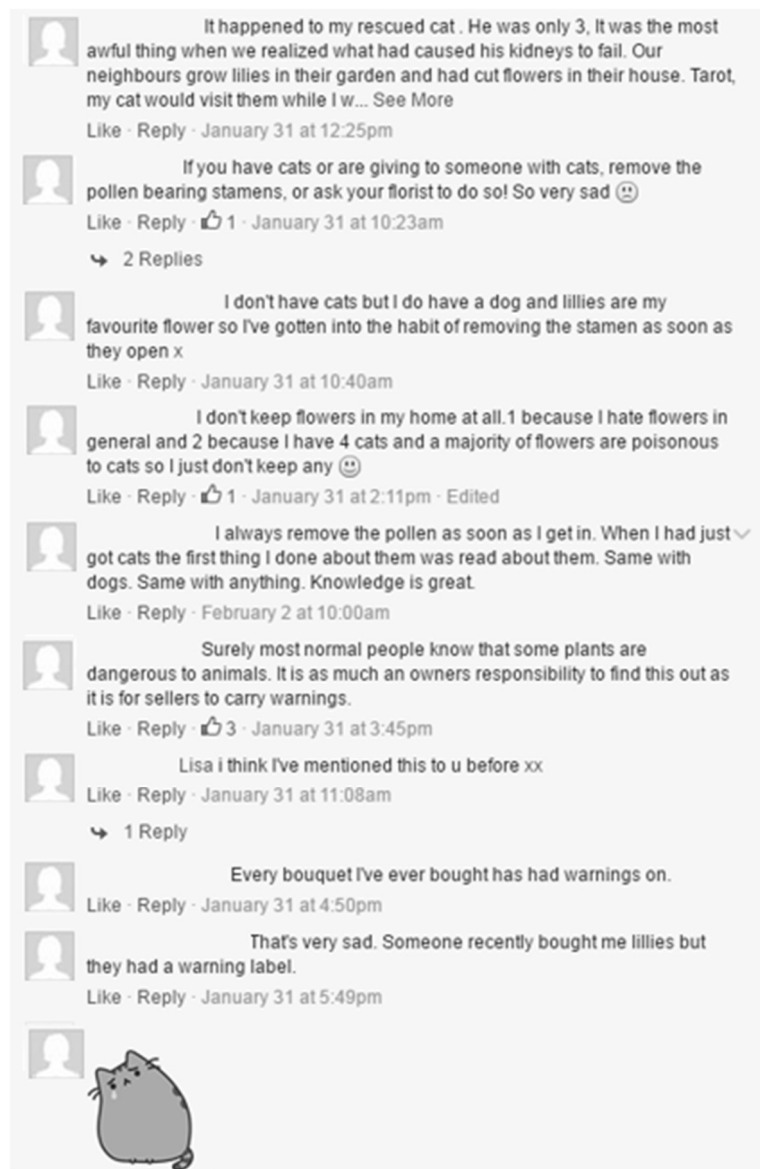
4.4.1 - Brand Altruism

One occurrence where negative emotion helped a company was when it was trying to show consumers that the brand cared, that the company has an altruistic side. The important distinction between this section and the last is that having an emotional connection was very much something that participants took away from viewing the negative page. Brand Altruism on the other hand can be seen by participants who did not have a connection, they can simply see that the intention of the use of negative emotions was to raise awareness about an issue. They do share similarities but can exist independent of each other.

During observations some posts showed brand altruism, Figure 4.1 as shown above is a good example of this. This post showed how a brand can use negative emotions to raise awareness about an issue, showing that they care. This post uses sadness, making customer aware of a Cat dying from lilies which are toxic to cats. It uses a well-known news website, BBC News, in order to validate the information, they present to customers. This post had 41 likes, 169 shares and 13 comments. This

shows that the informative aspect meant lots of shares, people wanted to spread this good message. Figure 4.4 shows the comments of this post.

Figure 4.4 - Pet Supplier 1 Comments



The comments on this post showed that the consumers were not offended, they felt that the company was trying to help them and to raise awareness on an issue that most of their customers might be affected by. Whilst the comments did indicate that the customers felt sadness it was not directed at the company, rather at the situation and the fact that more cats might die. It showed again how sadness has a unique place

amongst negative emotions, with people able to be sad but also have a positive opinion. The informative message as well helps to show the brands altruism as the consumer feels like they are learning something that's of benefit to them. If the sadness is used subtly, to show the company cares then this can be very effective. Another post from a publication company showed brand altruism, in this case showing they cared about some stolen kittens in Figure 4.5.



Figure 4.5- Publication Post

Figure 4.6- Publication Comments

Costs a small fortune to adopt a kitten from out local humane society. Maybe it prevents people from adopting and they resorted to stealing them.

Like · Reply · 2 · January 4 at 1:33am

You get them vaccinated, health checked, flea and worm treated, any other health issues treated, microchipped, neutered...

Adoption fees cover barely any of those costs, let alone the cost of the food, laundry, staff labour cost, cleaning equipment and products, litter..need i go on?!

Like · Reply · 2 · January 4 at 1:26pm

Well Kayleigh, our center doesn't do all of that. You have to spay or neuter the animal yourself, a kitten may or may not have had its first vaccinations, they don't microchip them and they get donations of food, litter, cages, and volunteer staff...I know because I've donated all of the above and my children have volunteered. Need I go on?

Like · Reply · January 4 at 2:38pm · Edited

Good to know these poor babies are safe, as if most of them haven't been through enough as it is and they're not even safe in a rescue centre! 😞

Like · Reply · 1 · January 4 at 1:53pm · Edited

People will do anything for money to pay for there drinking and drugs and for pinched 2 baby kitten well I hope they get them back and put them that taken them should be locked up 😞😞

Like · Reply · January 4 at 12:39am

Well obviously they have a home now.... Honestly dont think stealing was the intent though, rescue maybe but no.... If I were given a chance to save some poor animal stuck at SPCA I'd gave and run too... My heart breaks every time I go there!!

Like · Reply · 1 · January 3 at 4:41pm

5 Replies

Val Kill-Cook Shared x

Like · Reply · January 3 at 4:19pm

Laura-Beth Dawson How. Did they get in. Dont they have safty messures on plaxe

Like · Reply · 1 · January 4 at 11:51am

Moiria Sisi OMG they are identical to my two cats lol

Like · Reply · January 3 at 6:52pm

Gillian York How low can some people get,

Like · Reply · 1 · January 3 at 4:11pm

Steve Green Shared

Like · Reply · January 3 at 4:31pm

Lorraine Kluczkowski Hope they are OK and turn up soon. Shared.

Like · Reply · January 3 at 4:33pm

Lesley Anne Smullen how could that happen ?

Like · Reply · 4 · January 3 at 4:03pm

Filbert Bob makes you despair of some people

Like · Reply · January 3 at 5:26pm

Aileen Gentry Why!!

Like · Reply · January 3 at 10:02pm

Christina Clarkson Poor babies. Shared.

Like · Reply · January 3 at 6:54pm

Sue Whitehouse Please share this

Like · Reply · January 3 at 5:12pm

Tammy Boemper How can I help

Like · Reply · January 5 at 4:38am

Gillian Mortimer Shared this is tragic 😞😞😞

Like · Reply · January 4 at 1:15pm

awww no thats so sad why steal those poor babies hope they are found safe and sound soon

Like · Reply · 2 · January 3 at 4:03pm

Pray that they are safe.

Like · Reply · 11 · January 3 at 4:10pm

I hope it was not for ill intent.

#blessthesekittens

Like · Reply · 12 · January 3 at 4:05pm

Weird they took the kittens plus paperwork and nothing of monetary value.

Like · Reply · 2 · January 3 at 5:39pm · Edited

Bastards hope they rot in hell so hope these babies are found safe

Like · Reply · January 4 at 8:04am

Poor little babies, wonder why these people did this?!

Like · Reply · January 3 at 5:46pm

Hope they are safe!

Like · Reply · 1 · January 3 at 7:06pm

This is why I like to be on the premises keep an eye on the kitties always used to have people on these rescue sites

Like · Reply · 1 · January 3 at 4:57pm

How da hell did that happened??? Someone...not paying attention?

Like · Reply · 2 · January 3 at 6:28pm

Amen ❤️❤️❤️

Like · Reply · January 3 at 7:46pm

Hope it was for a good home and nothing awful

Like · Reply · January 3 at 9:18pm

Aww poor things, God i hope there OK.

Like · Reply · January 3 at 5:25pm

Figure 4.6 shows a publication posting about kitten that were stolen, appealing for information. To consumers they seem like they care, that they are doing their duty and sharing the news to try and help. It also helps consumers; they feel good if they like or share as they can feel like they are helping to raise awareness about this problem. They may be sad about the situation but they can do something about it by telling their Facebook friends about it. Comments such as “how can I help” and “poor babies. Shared” show the common theme here. They do not blame the companies for their sadness, they blame the situation and appreciate the fact the company are trying to help.

For the interviews looking at what consumers thought the intention of negative page was gives interesting insights. This was quite divisive, some participants felt the intentions were good whilst some saw them as bad. There was not really a middle ground, participants thought the page was good as it was trying to raise awareness among other things or bad as it was trying to guilt people into buying from them. Looking at both what participants felt the intentions were and their opinions of the page shows the differences between participants.

Participants felt there were some good intentions behind the negative emotions used. One popular theme amongst some participants was that the company was trying to show they care. The company was trying to raise awareness of issues and problems with pets in order to show that they care about pets. BO said for example when asked about the use of negative emotions:

BO: I think it is just trying to make people be careful and how to solve this

problems, I think there must a cure to these problems like clean their pets more.

They felt the company was doing a duty, they were putting across a message that to them came out as that people should care about their pets. They also felt that the content was trying to connect with readers by being personal. They felt that brand was simply trying to raise awareness and used the negative emotions in order to have a positive influence on the world.

Some participants also talked about charities and what their intentions were when sharing negative emotions. Some participants felt that as the intention of a charity was to raise awareness of a problem it was ok for them to use negative emotions. For profit companies on the other hand were just trying to increase margins and make money which was not alright. When CT was asked about charities using negative emotions he responded with:

CT: its umm there is a difference in the sense that the purpose of the charity is to raise like money to help the poor which can not really be seen as capitalists but you know with commercial companies its mainly just to line their own pockets, to make money.

The intention of charities is different to commercial companies, meaning that participants felt it was more acceptable for charities to use negative emotions than companies. Trying to evoke emotion was a trait shared by charities and the negative page which is important to consider when looking at the emotional reaction to the

pages.

It is interesting to consider the differences that participants thought of when regarding the intention and their opinion of the negative page. The divide shows that not every user interprets the posts in the same way, with some seeing it as a good way to engage with users whilst others felt that it was manipulating and unprofessional. It shows a complex perception of these posts, with no unified understanding of the intention. In regard to the brand's altruism I can determine that this kind of message needs to be clear when used with negative emotions - there is no use upsetting people or inciting negative emotions if does not have a positive effect on brand perceptions.

4.4.2 - Intention of Negative Posts

Many participants felt that the intention of the content on the negative page was bad and came up with multiple reasons for this. A common theme was that it was trying to play on people's emotions which they felt was not a good thing. They felt that the posts were trying to guilt people, that they were using fearmongering as well as trying to make people feel a certain way. SD said:

MD: So when a company uses negative emotions what impact does that have on your opinion of them?

SD: That it is not a very positive company and that they sort of, that they, guilting their customers and stuff into buying their things.

When participants felt the negative page was trying to play on their emotions it

usually resulted in negative outcomes and reactions (reviewed below). Some participant's opinions of the content were quite extreme, with MP saying that sharing the posts were as bad as carrying out the negative act:

MD: Ok so why do you think it is wrong?

MP: Because you're sharing it, you sharing it is just as horrible as doing it to them, I do not want to see that, as I'm scrolling through my happy Facebook page.

Some participants also felt the content was unprofessional, that it was too personal rather than maintaining a composed attitude. Having this opinion on the intention of the content meant that consumers immediately were put on the defensive, they could see the meaning behind the message which shaped their views on the brand and the outcomes of the content.

4.4.3 – Buying Outcomes and Brand Opinion

Having looked at how participants interact with negative posts and what they thought the intention was I now look at the outcomes they take away from this. These can range from whether they are more likely to buy from the company or whether they go away with a negative opinion of the brand afterwards. It will also consider which page was preferred by participants.

Participants were asked after viewing both pages which one they preferred.

Interestingly it was a close outcome, with 10 participants preferring the positive page

compared to 6 for the negative page. Whilst with the positive page was preferred by more participants there were a lot less outcomes, fewer participants had any opinions regarding what the page was trying to achieve. They were however all positive outcomes, for example SD said:

MD: Ok does those sorts of posts make you want to buy from the company more?

SD: Erm, more than the other one yeah.

MD: Yeah, whys that?

SD: Because of stuff like, it makes you read it more, like you look at the competition and it makes me read that and then it makes me look at other stuff and then oh look they've got a deal on, it makes you look what they have for sale because there's offers and stuff like that.

SD felt like they would read the page more than they would the negative page, with the positive page being chosen as the one they are more likely to buy from. Others said they liked the company more and would be more likely to buy from them for this reason. There was however not much more said about this page, with participants not really identifying any effect the page had on them. It was vanilla, just another page that they see every day on Facebook.

The negative page on the other hand had many negative outcomes, where participants stated they did not like the emotions that were being put across. These included feeling that the content alienates them, that it makes them "miserable" and

left with an unpleasant feeling after viewing the post. This then manifests itself in actions, from not wanting to associate themselves with the brand to going out of their way not to buy from the company because of the content of the posts. Hastings, Stead and Webb (2004) determined that the long term effects of fear appeals and negative emotions were not being considered, highlighting that the outcomes could be longer lasting than one might think. There was also more vocal dislike of the negative posts. MP had a strong negative reaction to the negative page during interviews:

MD: So what do you feel about this company after these posts?

MP: I do not like people that share pictures of abuse on animals, I think they're doing just as wrong as people that are doing the abuse, so I probably would not do anything with them.

4.4.4 – Conclusion

This section shows that consumers would be more likely to have positive outcomes from a positive page rather than one that uses negative emotions. There is an exception though and that is when a page uses negative emotions to be altruistic, showing their values and that they have a caring side. This however can also be done using positive emotions and if anything is much more effective this way as there isn't the risk of people taking offense or feeling sad/angry. The risk of using negative emotions having a huge effect on the possibility of a person buying from the company is too great to run the risk of using them. This section shows that for RO3

there is a strong possibility of consumer coming away with negative lasting opinions of the brand after the use of negative emotions.

4.5 - Complexity of Emotion

Finding both a positive and negative outcome to the use of negative emotions shows the complexity of how negative emotions are perceived. So far the findings have highlighted how there are perceived benefits to the use of negative emotions, with some strong reasons for their use. There are also however huge downsides to their use, the way that participants have a negative reaction to their use as well as their long term impact on the brand. These positives and negative exist within the mind frame of the user at the same time, with a complex and interesting picture emerging regarding how these emotions are processed by the individual. I look at the difference between the emotions and the role this plays on participant's opinions. I also explore how these findings relate to Andrade & Cohen (2007) and Goldsmith, Cho and Dhar (2012) ideas that negative emotions can be experienced at the same time as positive ones. I look at how they relate to each other and the findings that show this sort of experience can be positive as well as negative.

4.5.1 - Difference Between Emotions

A key finding so far was the positive outcomes of using negative emotion, mainly the fact that it grabbed consumer's attention, helped form an emotional connection, and showed that the brand had an altruistic side. On the flip side of this was the negative effective, the aversion participants felt towards negative posts. In order to explain

how these two vastly different outcomes occur when looking at the same material it is perhaps best to look at the emotions used in greater detail. During the interview stage, the negative page that consumers were shown included different types of negative emotions. There was sadness/anger about abused kittens, guilt about not microchipping your dog, and fear about how worms can affect humans. These emotions are across the sphere of negative emotions, with each having a different effect on the participant.

Looking at the responses to the use of these different emotions, an interesting pattern emerges. The reaction to fear appeals was universally disliked, participants saw that the company was trying to make them worry which in turn made them angry and unhappy at the brand. The same could be said for guilt, these posts did not create an emotional connection with the consumer. Often the response was one of annoyance or distrust, sure they grabbed attention but once the attention was grabbed the result was not a positive outcome for the brand. AB highlights how they feel that guilt is being used to exploit customers:

MD: ok, and why do not you like them using guilt?

AB: It is just unnecessary, it is trying to exploit the general public into using their products.

For sadness however there was a completely different story, this is where emotional connection and brand altruism was really felt. Sadness allowed companies to connect with the consumer, especially when sadness was used with a hint of

positivity. An example of this was the beverage company highlight above, making the consumer care about the advert posted on their social media page. The sadness was tinged with positivity about friendship, overwhelmingly making consumers care about what was going on. Indeed, with the negative pages this sort of response could be seen from participants. They felt sadness from the post, they did not like the content but felt the emotion from it. This sadness then manifested itself in an emotional connection to the brand, even though they felt sad at what they saw it was not always directed at the company. This emotional connection meant that they thought the company cared, and even though they did not want to see the content they could help but feel engaged. Sometimes this feeling that the company cared, that they were altruist overwhelmed any discomfort or aversion they had to negative emotions. Whilst this was rare it showed that sadness, albeit tinged with positivity, could engage the consumer and build an emotional connection. This supports Roozen (2013) who found sad appeals were preferred to warm appeals for both for-profit and not-for profit. The novelty of the use sadness generated more attention, which is something my study also shows with participants finding the sad appeals draw their attention. Wang (2008) also found similar results, although in their study women found sadness to be more effective than men did.

4.5.2 - Experiencing Positive and Negative Emotions

Looking back at Andrade & Cohen (2007) and Goldsmith, Cho and Dhar (2012) studies into how people consume negative emotions can help offer insight into the results of this study. Andrade & Cohen (2007) found that people can experience negative and positive emotions at the same times, explaining why people purposely

watch horror films. They can feel fear but also at the same time feel happiness, with co-activation of these two emotions allowing this to happen. Interestingly I found this happened some of the time, consumers could feel positive about the outcome of using negative emotion, feeling happy about seeing them. They found it interesting and sometimes heartening to see the companies caring about issues, even if they felt sad or fearful because of this. However, most of the time this was not the case during the interviews. Participants on the most part felt negativity towards the use of negative emotions, only rarely feeling purely positive. When they felt solely negative they came away from the experience with a negative mind-set, they did not like the company or the posts, which meant that they did not feel any happiness towards the post. This shows that in this situation, when encountering negative emotions on social media, co-activation is not the case. Consumers can have conflicting thoughts on the matter, but not to the extreme that they feel pleasure from a negative emotion.

Goldsmith, Cho and Dhar (2012) found that priming guilt before a consumption experience enhanced the pleasure from this experience. As this study was not looking at consumption experiences, it is difficult to compare the two, with the negative emotion being used in a different way. However, it can look at how the use of negative emotions influenced participant's happiness when looking at the posts. This sort of pleasure was not found in this study; participants mostly did not feel happy when looking at the posts presented to them. Even those that had a positive outcome from the negative emotions did not feel happiness from the posts, they felt a connection but the negative nature of the content still made them feel sad

4.5.3 – Gender Differences

In this study, the sample consisted of 9 females and 7 males, which although is not 50/50 is still quite balanced. This study found no real discernible difference between males and females when it came to their attitude towards negative emotions used on social media. Out of 7 men 4 preferred the positive, out of 9 women 6 preferred it. This left an equal number who preferred the negative page. Indeed, the comments about the negative use of emotions were very similar from both genders. Below AB, a male, shares a similar response to CP, a female:

AB: If they're willing to use negativity against me I feel like they are just not the sort of company I'd associate with.

And -

MD: so what opinion of the company do you have after seeing these type of posts?

CP: a bit fearmongering, a bit like you know when you have that one friend that just whinges the whole time, who never has anything nice to say about anything. I think if it showed up on my newsfeed like that that day after day after day I would be like oh my god just stop aha..... I'd probably unfollow it because I wouldn't want to see it.

Indeed, the outcomes were remarkably similar throughout when it came to outcomes and their lasting opinion of the pages. This goes against most previous literature which found that women were more influenced by negative emotional appeals than

men (Kemp, Kennett-Hensel and Kees, 2013; Wang, 2008). There being no difference in the effectiveness of these emotional appeals does not mean there was not any difference at all amongst the gender. The one thing that stood out that was a big difference was the initial emotional reaction that participants had to these pages. Females were a lot more likely to initially have a strong emotional reaction, especially to the negative posts, at least outwardly. Females vocalised their initial emotional reaction, with CP, SG and AC below showing this initial emotion when viewing the negative page:

*CP: Ok.....*scrolling*..... That's posts a bit growly.....ohh..... ohhh nooo that cats got coloured in. I've seen this before, it makes me sad..... aww their called smurf and shrek, I didn't know that before.....aw.....aww look, it would be funny if it wasn't so horrible. I bet it smells, isn't it permanent marker or is it just like colourful pes. Aww they are permeant markers, I bet they stank.....ow sale....*

And

AC – Ok [Looking at page] Awww. That's horrible. Oh no. Oh my... wait I want to read them first... That's the law now isn't it get your dog microchipped? Ok, let's have a look at the... I think I've seen this one before. Ok.

And

SG: [looking at negative page] aww, its little sad kittens.

These reactions were all to the post that uses sadness and anger, where kittens are shown to be coloured in with permanent marker. These were visible and audible reactions, the expressions on participants faces was one of concern and shock.

Whilst these were their initial reactions they quickly went one, with the initial emotion not seeming to have much of an influence on their rational judgement making. Indeed, out of these three above SG went on to prefer the negative page, even though she had that initial reaction. Males of the other hand were far less expressive, often just saying what they thought about the post. Whilst this shows that females were more verbally responsive it doesn't change the outcomes of what they thought about the use of negative emotions. Exploring this on a larger scale to determine whether there is a difference between the genders would be a useful exercise. Based on this data it would be close, with slightly more males preferring the negative emotions.

4.5.4 – Conclusion

This section shows that negative emotions are complex, with both positive and negative experience arising from their use. Also different types of emotions have different impact, sadness has the potential to be very useful if used correctly. The different genders also experience emotions differently, with women more vocal and expressive about their negative reactions.

4.6 - Contempt for Marketing

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was a general distrust of marketing. Participants *expected* the use of negative emotions and were not surprised that these sort of techniques were used. In addition, general marketing techniques were seen as bland, not being interesting enough to warrant any interaction or much opinion. In

the same vein the ethical aspects of using negative emotions were discussed, looking at the participant's opinion on the ethics of marketing. Finally, this research will look at the difference between charities and corporate use of negative emotions within marketing, and how consumers process marketing from these different sources. The areas in which participants had a contempt for marketing will be explored in further detail.

4.6.1 – Distrust of Marketing

This study found that many participants had a very low opinion of marketing and were not surprised when marketers used these negative tactics. During observations this was the case with consumers expecting companies to use any means necessary to sell to them, with the outcomes being undesirable. The post below shows both a strong negative emotional reaction as well as a distrust of marketing for an insurance company:

Figure 4.9 - Insurance Company Post

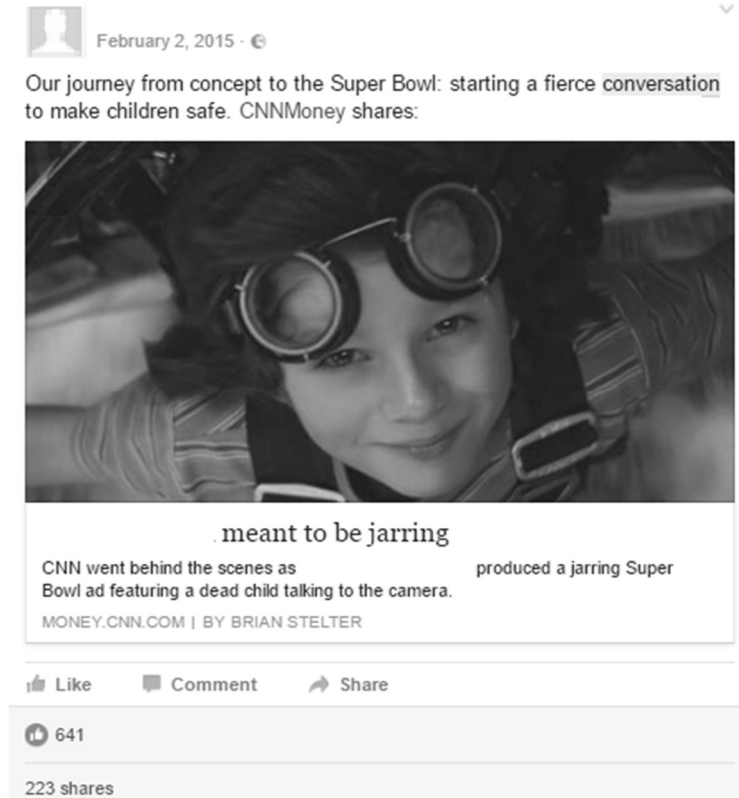


Figure 4.10 - Insurance Company Comments

Now, they Meant for it to be jarring?!?! How about a slap in the face, followed by a punch to the stomach for those of us who have lost a child?? How insanely cruel is it to remind us of all the things we will miss with our child? How do you take ... See More
Like · Reply · 11 · February 4, 2015 at 6:11pm

Lmao. Paying your employees to defend the nationwide name! It is painfully obvious.
Like · Reply · 5 · February 4, 2015 at 6:26pm

With this along with firing a breastfeeding mother, it is clear that Nationwide does not like kids.
Like · Reply · 4 · February 4, 2015 at 6:38pm

What an awful slap in the face commercial to parents who have lost children. Bravo, nationwide! You did it again. The people in your advertising department should be fired, not breastfeeding mothers.
Like · Reply · 10 · February 4, 2015 at 6:38pm

You can post all the crap you want to justify your stupidity. You are a bunch of tone deaf, heartless ghouls. It would be nice if you acknowledge your poor judgement. But no, you turn on the PR machine to explain that it was intentional. You might want to rethink your strategy.
Like · Reply · 9 · February 4, 2015 at 7:04pm

Any redemptive light found within this commercial by anyone other than a parent who's own child died in one of the ways portrayed within is invalid and doesn't hold enough value to deserve to be heard at all.
Like · Reply · 1 · February 4, 2015 at 8:43pm

Every single thing about this ad is disgustingly evil and cruelty based. It merely alludes to death of - it isn't even a teaching prevention tool. It is 110% shock and horror based - the fact that they chose to air it during the Super Bowl cements the undeniable fact that shock factor at the expense of dishonored Heaven kids and their aching for them families is what and all they were after.
Like · Reply · 7 · February 4, 2015 at 8:45pm

Thanks for reminding me that I am a parent of a dead child. I mean because wow, for a second there I had forgotten about all those things that he won't be able to do. As you aired your ridiculous commercial, my heart broke and as my eyes filled with tears, those around me could've cared less about your message. Your marketing department should be fired and I pray none of them ever have to cope with a dead child.
Like · Reply · 15 · February 4, 2015 at 8:55pm

and the after effects of "starting a conversation with" are even worse. Today while in the checkout line getting groceries the cashier and person ahead of me are laughing over the commercial saying "who wants to hear and talk about a dead kid" <- I do, that's my little boy.
"Thanks" for making this already cold world even more of a heartless hell of a place for us to soul ache in, Nationwide.

Tasteless and out of place!!! I am the mother of a dead child ...do you think the insurance money meant anything? Hell no. Save your shocking crap for adult hours when there are no kids in the room and we have control of the remote!!!
Like · Reply · 9 · February 4, 2015 at 9:36pm

Agh I just read through these last few posts, all mom's with dead children... I hate this club...and no, Nationwide, nothing you say can make it better.
Like · Reply · 8 · February 4, 2015 at 9:38pm

Shame on you for this inappropriate and manipulative ad, and for firing a breastfeeding mother.
Like · Reply · 4 · February 4, 2015 at 9:43pm

Your moral compass is significantly skewed.... You must hate children and families by your actions
Like · Reply · 4 · February 4, 2015 at 9:59pm

Called and left a message yesterday in your Media Center and no return call today. Left another message today...anyone want to guess whether or not the morons call me back?
Like · Reply · 2 · February 4, 2015 at 10:07pm

I had my small children with me while we watched the Super Bowl. Your ad was horrifying and traumatizing. What is wrong with you? You are out of touch and heartless. Obviously none of you have children or have experienced loss. I will remember your ad so that I will remember to NEVER use you and bad mouth you every chance I get. Shame on you.
Like · Reply · 8 · February 4, 2015 at 11:48pm

The post is a link to a news article discussing an advert that the insurance company aired, the advert consisted of a small child talking about the things they would not do because they were dead from an accident in the home. Whilst the article explains that the company was trying to raise awareness about an issue, many customers did not take it that way. The post received 518 likes, 110 shares and 279 comments. What stands out amongst those figures is the number of comments, many consumers had something to say regarding the nature of the post. Often this was anger, with a feeling that the company was only trying to sell their insurance and using parent's worst fears against them. This anger was highlighted best in emotionally charged comments regarding tragedies that had happened in real life which the advert made consumers remember. They felt the company showed a lack of empathy, with the advert implying blame on the parents for the loss of a child. These posts got a lot of likes, with others sharing in their sadness.

The comments to this post also shows just how disappointed consumers are with the company, they feel like the company has sunk to new lows. It is these sort of posts, those that go out of their way to make consumers feel sad and angry, that build a distrust of marketing. These consumers will now take away a negative image of the brand, with one saying they would not use the company and would spread negative word of mouth about the brand. It is situations like this that make consumers distrust brands and companies, to some the damage done by this marketing will be unrepairable. Perhaps rather than taking on the issue by themselves they could have teamed up with an existing charity which may have reduced peoples distrust of the message that they were putting out.

Interviews was where this distrust of marketing was really felt. Participants thought it was common for marketing campaigns to do anything they can to try to sell to consumers, from intrusive ads to using unethical practices to get people to buy from them. There was a distrust, consumers did not feel marketing was honest. RT mentioned how he saw advertising as just a desperate attempt to sell stuff:

MD: what way do you see it?

RT: I just see it as advertising, as a very desperate attempt to sell stuff.

MD: are you not surprised?

RT: no no, im actually surprised when people are surprised [MD: ok], because I feel there is so much advertising around us all the time and umm it does not shock me that they are after the sale with discounts or those sentences.

Heath and Heath (2008) also found that consumer found advertising in particular was misleading irresponsible. In this case RT had a very negative outlook of advertising being on the extreme end of the scale. Many participants repeated this sort of attitude towards marketing, although in a much subtler way. Participants often did not specifically say they thought marketing was bad but did describe it as “cheap” and “marketing ploys”, indicating the contempt they held for certain marketing practices. There was a general thought process that even though many participants thought it was dishonest to use negative emotions it was okay because everybody else does. They understood why companies use them, and although they may not agree, they just accept it. This shows a desensitisation to the use of negative emotions - consumers do not like it but they just see it as part of marketing and have come to

expect it. This would suggest that using these techniques and other unethical marketing practices has tainted the sector, leaving consumers expecting the worst from companies. CT for example thinks it is just the way marketing is nowadays even though they are not really affected by it:

MD: so these posts that are trying to make you scared or angry, how do they affect your opinion of the brand and company? That they are trying to make you feel this way, that they are trying to make pet owners worry and feel this way.

CT: I think that's just the modern age of marketing. Most of marketing is trying to invoke feelings and play on people emotions to try and get a sale. Like these posts might not have any impact on someone emotionless like me but for someone who might be easily manipulated by articles it would probably hit a really strong note and that's fair enough but sometime it might not be ethical to play on someone's emotions like that or someone's fears or insecurities. It could lead to someone's dog who has worms being put down because the human might be really paranoid about getting worms themselves.

Indeed, multiple participants felt that marketing should be positive, that the brand should be putting itself forward in a positive light. Participants felt positive marketing would improve their opinion of the company and is the way they *want* brands to communicate with them. Heath and Chatzidakis (2012) found that consumers wanted marketing to have a positive impact on society and that they thought it was possible. Here CP mentioned how companies need positivity in their marketing:

MD: So are these the sort of posts you would expect from a commercial company?

CP: Umm I think if it was me I perhaps would not word it so one way umm so like the dog chipping one 'what kind of dog owner would not get their dog microchipped' sounds kind of accusatory and I would not like I say if it was me I would not want to place my, give an opinion of my company so on one side of the fence. I would want to be more neutral and be more positive. Um and it is the same really with the worms one its oh my god I might die if I get worms from my animal, I think it could be put across in a more positive way. So yeah...

Wanting their marketing to be more positive shows these participants attitudes towards marketing as a medium - they see it as a reflection of the brand itself. If the marketing is positive it means the brand is positive, if it is negative then they feel that it can damage the image of the company.

This shows how people can perceive marketing activities, with this consumer sharing an opinion that marketing uses any means necessary to get a sale, including playing on consumer's emotions. The assumption that this is an appropriate marketing technique was explored further:

MD: Ok, so you say that but do you think it is alright for them to do it, do you think it is an acceptable marketing technique?

CT: I think nowadays it is an acceptable marketing technique yeah

MD: But do you personally, do your own feelings, not just like whether it is acceptable in general but to your own personal moral compass?

CT: I mean to my own personal moral compass it not right but they still do it you know.

Whilst the participant is not comfortable themselves with the marketing technique, they expect it to be used. Their own moral compass may not allow the use of negative emotions but they think it is acceptable because everyone else is doing it, and if everyone is doing it then it becomes acceptable. In regard to the use of social media as a marketing tool there was an even higher degree of distrust - participants did not like how advertising was encroaching on a platform where people could previously choose to ignore companies.

This study reflects Heath and Heath (2008) and Heath and Chatzidakis (2012) findings that there is a mistrust of marketing. These studies found through qualitative techniques that consumers found marketing to be dishonest and deceitful. This mistrust has an impact on how the marketing messages come across. Consumers are already thinking negatively about the marketing material, meaning that no matter whether the posts are positive or negative the consumer will view it with a pre-determined mind set. This can help explain why participants react strongly to the use of negative emotions. If they already have a negative mind set then consuming these negative emotions won't do anything to help their mindset. It reinforces the negative image of marketing they have and leads to an aversion to negativity.

4.6.2 – Tedium of Marketing

Another common theme that emerged was the tedium of marketing, participants were not interested in content unless it really stood out. Marketing was seen as boring and not something that participants wanted to see on their Facebook page. The positive page that was shown during the interviews was seen as bland, as not having anything on the page that would make them take an interest. Here I first looked at participant's emotional reaction to the content, with their lack of emotional reaction proving key. I also looked at the interactions participants would have with the social media pages, finding that the positive marketing messages were not very often interacted with. Finally, I looked what participants thought the intention of page was as well as their opinion of the content presented to them.

This section looks at the emotional reaction participants have to the page as well as their initial reaction when reading the content. It looks at their more personal feelings towards the content, how it makes them feel and how they interpret the information that they see. The general emotional reaction to the positive page was quite neutral, with some having slightly positive reaction with others having slightly negative reactions. There were not any extreme emotional reactions to this page. Some participants felt quite positive about the page, especially after viewing the negative page first. EP's initial reaction to the positive page was:

MD: umm if you want to look at the other page...

EP: well that's a much more positive page, looking at the post two posts already... well that's just much more...

MD: because its positive does it catch your attention any more?

EP: I could engage a bit more with this compared to the negativity of the previous one.

Others were happy to see happier photos, to see cute puppies and helpful information. This reaction was not overly positive, no one reacted in a very positive way to viewing this page. There were also a few negative reactions, such as disliking the logo and the fact it was too commercial for some participant's liking. Here the general emotional reaction was nothing of note, which for the positive page that uses the type of marketing many companies use just did not make consumers react.

Looking at the interaction participants would have, the positive page was mainly very passive. Clicking on the posts seemed to be the most popular interaction that occurred with very few going beyond reading the links and posts that were on the page. NB for example said they would click the links:

MD: Ok, so if you saw this post, say it came up on your sponsored, the dog naming one 'we like Charlie best what's your favourite? [NB: yeah] say that came up on your Facebook feed would you do anything? Like how would you feel about that?

NB: Um I'd probably click on it just because I have a dog and I would want to see what other names are on there, if there are any other names on that list. So I would probably click on that one.

Whilst this action was very passive it was still positive, the marketing was achieving its aim of getting people to click on their links. It did fail however to generate any real sort of interest from the participants, simply clicking a link will not increase its reach or indicate how the user interpreted the post. This shows just how disinterested participants were - they did not really want to interact with the marketing. They would rarely click on the link, often opting to scroll past if it appeared on their Facebook page.

There were rare occasions however where participants felt they would interact in a more active manner, for example CP said they would share the post in a private message, getting another person to like the page. In addition, DD explained that they might share the post if something was in it for them, if there was a potential reward such as money off or something to win in a competition. Whilst these were quite positive interactions with the positive page, there were also some passive negative interactions. This mostly came in the form of just scrolling past and not interacting with the post at all. The act of not interacting at all is an important aspect to consider as it shows the lack of interest the user has with the post. AC for example highlighted:

MD – Ok. So if you saw this page on, if you saw one of these pages on Facebook come up, what would you do and like, what would you feel?

AC – I'd probably most definitely scroll past it.

MD – Scroll past it?

AC – Yeah, like I've seen pages like these on Facebook all the time and they want you to sign up, but then, they want you to sign up and then you know what I mean you keep getting all these things and then you're just sick of hearing them so you just end up unfollowing the page.

Scrolling past is a common action; the page simply does not do enough to capture the participant's attention. This is not to say however that positive emotions cause this action, most simply felt they would scroll past the page as did not offer anything different to other Facebook pages out there.

This highlights how participants felt they would not interact with the positive page in an active way. They would not share the posts or even like them, they simply mostly read the links or just scrolled past.

With the negative page a lot of participants reacted in a passive manner. Passively interactions again consisted of scrolling past and not paying any attention to post, often being the same users participants who said that is what they would do with the positive page as well. This perhaps shows that for some individuals how they interact Facebook pages is the same regardless of content, they just are not interested in any form of marketing on the platform. In general, the fact most participants said they would not interact with the pages told me quite a bit about their attitudes towards commercial Facebook pages. It showed how an interaction, be it a like, share or comment, was not given out very easily. They were selective, especially when it came to marketing on social media. It had to be something that really captured their attention or interest in order to be worthy of interaction. This is where negative

emotions were helpful for companies, their content was more striking and attracted more interactions than mundane positive posts.

I also looked at what the participant's perception of the intention of the content and company is. I studied what participants felt the company was trying to put across, what they wanted to show the word and to get consumers to think and feel.

Participant's opinions on the positive page and its intention were all in the same vein - people saw it mostly as *trying* to be informative and interesting. It was trying to be helpful to pet owners and give offers that would be useful for their customers. They did not however feel this intention paid off, with most participants not really finding the content that interesting. Some also felt that the positive page was trying to build a community, to get customers talking about issues that affect them and talk about the posts that can be helpful for them. Here CP discusses the intention of the positive page:

MD: so do these posts make you more or less likely to buy or use the company

CP: I think more likely as like I say they are trying to build a community rather than bombard with buy this buy this buy this, they are trying to build something and are trying to include people and make it a conversation. Also there's an offer here as well so I'm in for the offer... um... so yeah

The majority of participants felt that the positive page was trying to engage in a positive fashion, being helpful and informative. The intention of the contact was to

help people and communicate to customers in a friendly way. Whilst this was the dominant opinion of the content there were a few participants who saw it differently.

Some participants felt that the intention of the positive page was to simply sell stuff, that it came across in a very commercial voice. These participants looked past the content and just felt that the page was a marketing tool, one that they did not really care for when they were browsing Facebook. RT said for example:

MD: so what do you feel about this page?

*RT: I now think these are using positive emotions as you said earlier. So these are using positive emotions to sell me s*** no, I think there's subtle selling here.*

Those participants that said they thought the intention of the positive page was to sell them stuff generally did not follow companies on Facebook. Also they tended to say the same about the negative page, showing that they felt all the companies were just trying to sell them stuff they did not want or need.

The intention of the negative page was quite divisive - some participants felt the intentions were good whilst some saw them as bad. There was not really a middle ground, participants thought the page was good as it was trying to raise awareness of relevant issues, or bad because it was trying to guilt people into buying from them. Looking at both the good and bad intention and opinions of the page highlights the differences between participants.

4.6.3 – Ethical Aspects

One area that it is important to look at is whether participants thought that the use of negative emotions by an organisation was ethical. This was quite a divisive area where there was a big split amongst participants - it depended very much on the context of the negative emotions and the perceived reason behind using them. Some participants felt that if the company was trying to make a difference, using negativity in order to raise awareness about an issue or to show that the brand cares. Under these circumstances the use of such a tactic can be deemed to be ethically okay. Participants understood that companies could make a difference to a particular social issue and by posting using negative emotions to highlight these issues then it was ok in their ethical viewpoint. Interestingly this thought was held by those who had previously had an adverse emotional reaction to the use of negative emotion. Initially they thought they should not be used as they did not want to see them, then after putting forward why they were being used their mind-set altered slightly, with the thought that if they were trying to make a positive difference then it was ok. MP for example thinks its an ok method of getting their point out there:

MD: do you think it is ethical for companies to use these sort of posts on social media?

MP: Mmm, I suppose they've got to get their point out somehow haven't they so using social media is a very good way to do it because pretty much everybody uses it, so I think it probably is ethical because everything's going social media way rather than advertisement on television really. So yeah.

Whilst this was often the case, when confronted with the idea that companies are using these emotions to inevitably sell their products, many participants changed their mind and thought that using negativity to sell was unethical. For example, SD answered with the following when asked if they thought using these techniques were ethical:

SD: Because of, its just not a decent way of getting someone to be interested in your company.

MD: Why is it, why is it not a decent way though?

SD: Just because of, it doesn't come across as, they're not selling the product, they're not selling it the right way, they're not doing the positive and the good things about it they're just putting the negative things about something else and then also saying their product's there. Yeah.

He thought that the company was not going about selling their product in the right way, that they it was to negative others had similar views on the ethics of using negative emotions, feeling that for-profit companies should not be using them. This contrast of opinion shows how consumers interpret different messages in a complex way, if they simply think the company is trying to sell to them then they are much more distrusting and are lot more aware of the type of message used. If they however feel that the marketing is trying to do more, raise awareness or interact with them on emotional level, then they are much more inclined to feel more positive about the marketing techniques the company uses. This backs up Heath and Heath

(2008), who found that marketing is perceived as mostly unethical although with the potential to be a force for good in the world.

4.6.4 - Corporate vs Charities Use of Negative Emotions

Whilst discussing organisational use of negative emotions, often the topic of charities came up. Consumers felt charities using negative emotions was not as offensive or unethical as when companies used them. This was because participants' understood that they were trying to help, all the money going to charities was helping people or animals, making a real difference in the world. In this case the ends justified the means, showing that there is a distinction between using negative emotions for social marketing and for companies. RC thought that negative emotions should only be used by charities:

RC: Yeah, I think if it is going to have to be done, and it, it can not be stopped then yeah it should just be for charities. Because actually the companies they'll have a basis of... the outcome of what they sell is to be good anyway, their products are there to stop it so I'd imagine they're making money off that anyway, because the whole point of charities is to show you what you can do to stop it happening to other people whereas I think the companies will be trying to direct it a bit more closer to home. So yeah I'd say if it has to be done then charities I think should be, not, yeah, allowed to a certain degree I still do not want to see horrific stuff but ...

This opinion that charities can use negative marketing techniques but companies can not highlight the difference between the areas. Charities have a much more extensive and successful history of using negative emotions than commercial companies, with consumers seeing them in a completely different light. This supports Parry et al (2013) who found that people were a lot more open to the use of shock advertising in the not-for-profit sector than in the for-profit. Roozen (2013) on the other hand found that for-profit companies also benefited from using negative emotions. Here we saw this to some extent, although charities is where even participants who did not like the use of negative emotions could see the benefit and justify the use. Consumers understand that in order to grab attention and to show why the cause they are raising money for is worthwhile negative emotions are sometimes the best method to get this across. In the case of charities using negative emotions it is a completely different experience for consumers, they want to help and marketing that stands out to them like this helps them do so.

4.6.5 – Conclusion

This section shows that marketing faces a lot of mistrust amongst consumers', they don't feel that it is good for society or that it is beneficial to them. They are bored of seeing marketing everywhere they go, with an overload in their everyday life's making them simply not care about it. They also feel that marketing is unethical and intrusive. Finally they highlight that charities have more "right" to use negative emotions. That its ok to make you feel sad if the work they are doing actually makes a difference to people or animals life's.

4.7 – Conclusion

Overall these findings highlight the complicated and diverse perceptions of consumers. Negative emotions aren't simple, there are perceived benefits to using them as well as a more emotional negative reaction to seeing them. At best they can be seen as a way for the company to show it cares and bringing issues into the light, improving the consumers' perception of the brand. At worst consumers' take an immediate protective and negative stance, viewing the page as untrustworthy and trying to play on their emotions to make a sale. In this case they come away with a negative opinion of the brand, in some cases a very negative one which could result in blocking the page or simply not buying from them in the future. The ethics of these practices are seen as quite muddy by consumers', especially for a for-profit company. For a charity on the other hand these techniques are expected and more tolerable, a charity is helping so they have more license to use negative techniques if it gets them money.

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION

5.1 - Introduction

This study's aim is to explore how consumers perceive the use of negative emotions by organisations, looking at how consumer perception influences their view of the brand. Having highlighted the key findings in the previous chapter, here I look at what these findings mean and how they impact both the area of research and in terms of social media marketing strategy. Managerial implications are also looked at, exploring what impact this study has on organisations use of social media. Limitations and future research are also highlighted, showing areas that could have been improved and what future research could be undertaken having explored this area. I also bring the study to a close, recapping key points.

5.2 - Research Objectives Recap

First I look back at the aim of the research and the four objectives that were conceived, exploring how they were answered within the findings. I start with the research objectives, looking at each aspect in detail. I then look at the overall aim and whether this study achieved it.

RO1: Explore if inciting the negative emotions of anger, fear and sadness create "likes", "reactions", "shares" and comments on Facebook.

Here I answered with observations being the main source of data; interviews also gave me an indication as to how participants would interact with the posts. From the observations, I found these posts had a lot of likes and shares, people engaged with the content. I also found they often had quite a range of comments, from support to

the brand to angry customers who swore never to use the company again. The observations showed that inciting negative emotions did create these outcomes, albeit the meaning behind them was unlikely to be what the company desired.

During interviews I found that participants more likely to interact with the negative posts, they would share or like the content they thought was most interesting. This was due to the engaging content, they cared about what was happening with the kittens in the sad post on the mock page (Appendix 3.2). They felt a connection to the content meaning they were more likely to share it. Getting engaging content is the important part here; overwhelmingly participants felt it was how interesting the content was that would get them to interact with it. The company was less important; the participant had to find the posts worthy of their time and interest. This meant that boring positive posts would not be interacted with; they simply were not interesting enough. Negative posts were more interesting as they produced a reaction. This reaction however often turned out to be negative, with participants not wanting to see them on their Facebook page. Of course how a participant says they would interact with a post and how they would in a real life environment could be completely different. One would think that people would be less likely to interact than what they say, this could be due to not being in the same frame of mind and not focusing on the posts like they did in the study.

RO2: Gain insights into the emotions these posts incite and how consumers interpret the messages put across.

Here there is a complex picture that needs to be unravelled, the emotions vary and fall into two opposing views. On one hand, a large proportion of participants from the

interviews had negative reactions to the negative posts. Most commonly, they felt shock and anger, shock at the content of the posts and anger at the company for sharing them. This shaped their opinion of the page; they simply did not like their use. Interestingly they did not always feel the emotions intended. No participants reported feeling guilty or fearful from the posts, these posts instead incited anger at their use. Anger/Sadness on the other hand did get the response that was expected, and this is where the complexity is seen. For some this post created sadness, making them upset about what was happening and that then transferred anger for the page making them feel that way. Other participants also felt sadness, with the key difference being that they also felt affection and empathy towards the company. The company showed it was caring, meaning that the sadness was directed at the situation that they had shared rather than the company itself in some participants. This highlights that how social media interpret marketing messages is quite unique, there was a range of feelings that arose and everyone had their own understanding and opinion of what was going on.

Also when for-profit companies used sadness as a means to happiness, such as the Guinness advert (Figure 4.2), I found that it was possible to have happiness as the overriding emotion. Using sadness to set the scene, to initially make consumers worried or upset, then having a positive closing message was shown to be really effective on social media. This suggests that people like to feel sad as long as there is then a positive outcome, where the sadness is lifted and the positive emotion is felt stronger due to having just felt the other extreme.

RO3: Determine the outcomes to the use of negative emotions in relation to the brand and consumer's opinion of their use within marketing.

This research objective can be looked at in two ways, first, at what outcomes I found consumers come away with. How they feel about the brand and its marketing after viewing the negative page. Second, I look at consumer's opinion of marketing in general, at what their thoughts were on the use of negative emotions. This includes how they perceived the use of negative emotions by for-profit companies in relation to not-for-profit organisations.

There were a wide range of outcomes that arose from this study, ranging from positive ones such as an increased emotional connection with the brand to very negative ones such as an avoidance of the company. Some participants felt that an outcome of the positive page was that it engaged them; it made them more likely do something such as repost the post or read the article. The positive outcomes were rarer during both the interviews and the observations; it was the minority that came away from viewing the negative posts with positive perceptions of the brand. The majority came out with negative outcomes; participants looked negatively on the brand. They felt the use of negative emotions alienated them. This research suggests that whilst some outcomes will be positive, the majority will not. This means that brands need to think very carefully when considering the use of negative emotions, as the negative outcomes outweigh the positive.

RO4: Determine whether different types of Facebook users interact and interpret negative posts in the same way.

This study found that there was no difference between the different types of social media users and how they interpreted negative posts among the participants of this study. Entertainment chasers all interpreted the posts in their own way with most

interpreting them negatively with only a few positively. Other groups as well were split, meaning that this study found that how you used Facebook had no bearing on your opinion on the emotional valance of the content. It can be suggested that a far bigger influence on how consumers interacted with negative posts was there view on social media marketing in general, their moral compass and their view of brands. Perhaps this is not surprising, with the types of users focusing on how people use Facebook to interact with their friends. Whether people consider a brand their “friend” is an area that could be looked into, as certainly in this study this had more of an impact on consumer perceptions

“How do consumers perceive organisational use of negative emotion on Facebook and what, if any, impact does this have on their perceptions of the brand?”

This was the aim of the study that comes in two parts, first to determine how negative emotions are interpreted on social media by consumers. Second, to understand if the use of negative emotions has an impact on perceptions of the brand. To begin with the first section, this study found that participants perceive negative emotions on social media in a complex way. A range of emotions are felt after viewing negative emotions on social media, from empathy to outrage and dislike. Overall however more participants perceived their use in a negative way, not liking seeing these type of emotions on their walls. No one was “happy” to see negative emotions, as you would expect there was often an initial reaction of shock or dislike to the posts. However, when looking at the impact on perceptions of the brand this shock factor sometimes turned into an emotional connection. With an emotional connection came a thought that the company cares, that they are raising awareness about an issue

and in the case of the interviews show that they care about people's pets. In these cases, the minority of them but still a significant portion, felt that company was being altruistic. They liked the fact issues were being raised and felt they were taking a stand in helping pet owners.

The majority of cases though did come away with negative perceptions of the brand. They felt that companies were not sincere in their use of negative emotions. Some felt they were trying to "guilt" people into buying from them. During observations as well I could see a strong backlash in some cases, where customers going as far as declaring they would never use the company again. This suggests that the use of negative emotions has a negative effect on the brands perception, more so than a positive one. It was however a complex picture, with no definitive answer as to what impact the use of negative emotions has. This research would suggest a negative impact is more likely, although the small section that had a positive outcome show why they are still used.

5.3 - Managerial Implications

This study has shown just how consumers react to the use of negative emotions, how they feel about that type of content and the effect it has on consumer's opinion of the brand. For social media marketers there is a clear message coming out of this research, think carefully before using negative emotions on social media. Using them can provokes complex reactions from consumers, with some that lead to a negative image of the brand.

5.3.1 Risk of Negativity

This study found that participants were polarized in how they viewed these posts, some came away with a positive affiliation with the brand whilst others did not like them. A big decider as to whether the content was effective was whether it formed an emotional connection with consumers. Emotions such as fear and guilt simply annoyed participants, meaning that whilst these may grab people's attention they may also have long term negative effects on the consumer's opinion of the brand. Using these types of emotions would be very risky, there would be a chance at alienating your target audience. Using sadness and anger on the other hand does have a chance at forming that connection that leaves participants with a positive outcome to your brand. This can however backfire, especially with sensitive topics that may cause distress rather than anger. Nationwide used sadness with an advert about a child's death, rather than showing they cared this brought up stress and fear that the same could happen to their own children. This showed that there is a thin line between having the right message and the wrong one, with there being a strong possibility that using negative emotions will cause negative reactions. This is an unnecessary risk that companies need to consider when deciding whether to use these types of messages.

This risk of people coming away with negative view of the brand is reflected by Urwin (2014) who found that generation Y often found negative emotions in shock advertising to be dull and unpleasant. Whilst Urwin (2014) didn't expand on what this

meant for the brand this study did, highlighting that people will avoid the brand on Facebook by “un-liking” the page and even not buying from them in the future

5.3.2 Social Media Preferences

One key finding that came from this study is how participants use Facebook, their reasoning for going on it and what they like to see. For most participants, they used Facebook as a cure for boredom, they go on it to see what people are up to and to see if anything interesting comes up on their news feed. Participants were habitual “scrollers”, with many scrolling through there feed to cure boredom and to find something interesting to read. Having engaging content that was worthwhile for them to stop scrolling, by making them laugh or being interested in what the post has to say. Whilst consumers wanted content they also felt that social media marketing should be positive, with the medium being used as a distraction from boring or upsetting real life’s. These ideas of positivity and engaging content were widespread amongst participants, showing that consumers do not want to be made to feel negative emotions on social media.

5.3.3 Marketing’s Role in Society

Participants also discussed how they think marketing should be done in general, giving ideas into what they want to see companies do on Facebook. They felt that companies can use marketing to be altruistic, to show they care and reach a wide platform. The use of negative emotions to achieve this is what divided participants opinions, not the fact the company was trying to show they cared. This is important for companies to consider, how people want marketing to interact with them and on

what terms is very important to consider. A lot of participants had a negative view of marketing due to intrusive and unethical uses in the past, they had a mistrust that needs to be considered by organisations when planning on how best to communicate. Whilst how companies can overcome this mistrust was not explored in this study, the idea of company showing they care and being altruistic was generally received positively. Doing this in a positive and proactive way seems to be how organisations can benefit most. Indeed, this study reflects Heath and Chatzidakis (2012) who found that people believe marketing can have a positive influence on society. If marketing was more ethical and altruistic then consumers would have a lot more trust.

5.4 - Limitations

This section presents the limitations of the study, with these being related to both methodology and scope of the research. First of all the sample used was quite small and restricted. For interviews, this consisted of 16 participants as well as 6 online observations. The sample size was small due to the need to get rich, qualitative data that explored the social reality of the participants. With the small size this also meant the sample was quite reflective of my own social demographic, it was a purposeful sample which meant that it may not be representative of the whole population. The age range was also quite limited, with a range from 19-34 with most being in their mid-twenties. This is however a key social media demographic, so it did include most typical social media users.

There were also limitations related to the research design. This study focused on Facebook, with all the posts found and examples used coming from Facebook. Facebook was used as it provided a focus for the study and is arguably the most popular social media platform. Using other social media platforms may have made the study more generalisable to social media in general but it would also have made it more difficult to conduct. A wider range of sources would need to be collected, with their also potentially being some difficulty in seeing what the differences would be between the channels.

As part of this study I used mock pages that presented two different Facebook pages for the same company, one which used positive emotions whilst the other used negative emotions. Although these page provided a good example of negative emotions, for some the context may have not had the impact. The pages were a pet services industry which meant that the negative posts were often about pets. To those who do not care much for pets or animals this may mean that the negative posts does not have the same impact as those who do care. This may have an impact on the findings, meaning in an ideal world all participants would have an interest in pet companies.

Another limitation was that negative emotions are difficult to define and are highly subjective. Something that one person considers to be an angry message or trying to use guilt another simply sees a neutral message or even positive. In the end whether a post used negative emotions ultimately came down to my own subjective view. This may mean that others reading this may feel that a post isn't using negative emotions. To negate this, I did ask a couple of people if they agreed with my assessment of a post, which they did. However, these may be the only other two people to think this

which is something out of my control. Also choosing the right negative emotions was difficult, I had to make sure the ones I chose reflected posts online. Others such as worry could have been used and may have had a different outcome.

This study also had ethical implications that reduced the effectiveness of the study. For example, the online observations were unable to find out people's gender, meaning an analysis of this aspect wasn't possible on this research data. Also, during the interviews participants were exposed to negative emotions, these had to be toned down and made sure to not be too distressing in order to protect participants.

Finally, the data itself had limitations, with these brought on by the nature of the study and fact it delved deep into consumers' opinions. The study found a complex picture, there was no conclusive proof that negative emotions should or should not be used. This is due to the qualitative nature of the study, it was far more exploratory rather than trying to determine the 'truth' of the matter. With there being no consensus as to whether negative emotions are good or bad it leaves room for further study.

5.5 - Future Research

Several opportunities for further research have arisen from this study and its findings. Firstly, there is the potential to explore how different types of users react to negative emotions. My sample of 16 was mostly made up of 'entertainment chasers', the most common type of Facebook user according to Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal (2015). Further research could explore whether there is a link between the different types of users and their reactions on a wider scale. Whilst this research

suggests that there is no link it was a small sample, with not enough of the other types of users to determine this on a wider scale.

Future research could also further explore the key findings of this study, with a few different potential opportunities. One could be looking at the link between a mistrust of marketing and how negative emotions in marketing influence this, do they reinforce the negative image of marketing or are consumers simply not bothered as they already have a low opinion? Another could be a wider quantitative study looking at whether the preference for avoiding negativity is widespread, or whether the benefits are seen by more people than this research would suggest. Also now that we know of potential complex impact this has on people this could be incorporated, it would be fascinating to see if more people saw it as a black and white issue or interpreted it with a degree of complexity

5.6 – Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore how consumers perceived negative emotions on social media and the impact this has on their perceptions of the brand. It explored using interviews and online observations how people reacted to negative emotions as well as exploring their thoughts and feelings on the matter. The main contribution of the study was highlighting the complex way that consumers interpret negative emotions. For some it immediately puts them off the brand, whilst others see it as a way of showing their altruistic side and completely acceptable. Some consumers had initially negative reactions but then on reflection decided it was ok, whilst others thought the opposite. This study also highlighted how there is a deep mistrust of marketing, with consumers expecting to be exploited or misled to get a sale. These findings lead to

the conclusion that using negative emotions is risky for an organisation, with the potential benefits being outweighed by the chance of alienating parts of their customer base.

APPENDICES

Appendix 3.1 – Mock Facebook Page (Positive Emotions)

The image shows a mock Facebook page for 'Petz Mansion'. The page layout includes a left sidebar with the profile picture (a dark hexagon with 'PETZ MANSION' text), the name 'Petz Mansion', and navigation links: Home, Posts, Photos, About, Community, and a 'Create a Page' button. The main content area features two posts. The top post, dated 26 April 2016, contains a quote by Anatole France: "Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened." The bottom post, dated 21 April 2016, is a promotional offer for 'Top 10 Pet Care Tips' from WebMD, including a link to the article and a 'Like', 'Comment', and 'Share' button. The right sidebar contains a 'Send Message' button, a 'Pet supplies' link, a 'Community' section with an 'Invite your friends to like this Page' button, an 'About' section with a 'Send message' button, and a 'Photos' section. A large promotional banner is overlaid on the bottom right of the page, featuring the Petz Mansion logo and a dog's face. The banner text reads: '10% OFF YOUR ORDER! Just use code 16PETZ at the Checkout Deal finishes May 28th'. Below the banner is a 'Like', 'Comment', and 'Share' button.

Petz Mansion
26 April 2016 · 🌐

"Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened."
— Anatole France
Share if you agree!

Like Comment Share

Petz Mansion
21 April 2016 · 🌐

Making sure your pets are healthy and taken care off is vitally important, here are ten tips that will help keep them in tip top condition....
<http://pets.webmd.com/ask-pet-health-11/vets-pet-care>

Top 10 Pet Care Tips
Basic care for your cat or dog can help avoid pet health risks, reduce pet overpopulation, and bring them home if they're lost. 10 tips from veterinary professionals to help keep your dog or cat healthy and happy.

PETS.WEBMD.COM | BY WEBMD

Like Comment Share

Petz Mansion
21 April 2016 · 🌐

Check out our latest offer!

10% OFF YOUR ORDER!

Just use code 16PETZ at the Checkout

Deal finishes May 28th

Like Comment Share



Petz Mansions

21 April 2016 · 🌐



Its competition time!

We want YOU to send us your favourite pics of your pets, from the smallest lizard to the tallest horse. At the end of every month we will choose our favourite with the winner getting a £20 gift card to spend at Petz Mansion. Here is one of our favourites so far!



10395202306351/?type=3



Petz Mansions

21 April 2016 · 🌐

We like Charlie best, which is your favourite?




Alfie beats Bella and Charlie to be Britain's top pet name

Alfie is also the most popular dog name among the nation's 8.5 million pooches while Charlie topped the poll as the number one name among the country's eight million cats.

DAILYMAIL.CO.UK

Appendix 3.2 – Mock Facebook Page (Negative Emotions)



Petz Mansion

Home

Posts


Photos

About

Likes

Create a Page

Like Follow Share ...




Petz Mansion
26 April 2016 · 🌐

It's our Spring Sale!

Here at Petz Mansion we have up to 50% off your favourite pet accessories, whether your a dog or cat person we are sure you can find the ideal purchase at the right price.

Just head to www.petz mansion.com for all the latest offers.

Like Comment Share




Petz Mansion
26 April 2016 · 🌐

"Children were not thought to be responsible"

What kind of disgusting ADULT would do this to these poor defenceless animals?? 😡

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-36137678>



Send Message

Pet supplies

Community

Invite your friends to like this Page

About See All


Send message

Pet supplies

English (UK) · English (US) · Polski · Español · Português (Brasil) +

Privacy · Terms · Advertising · AdChoices · Cookies · More

Facebook © 2017




Petz Mansion
26 April 2016 · 🌐

"Children were not thought to be responsible"

What kind of disgusting ADULT would do this to these poor defenceless animals?? 😡

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-36137678>



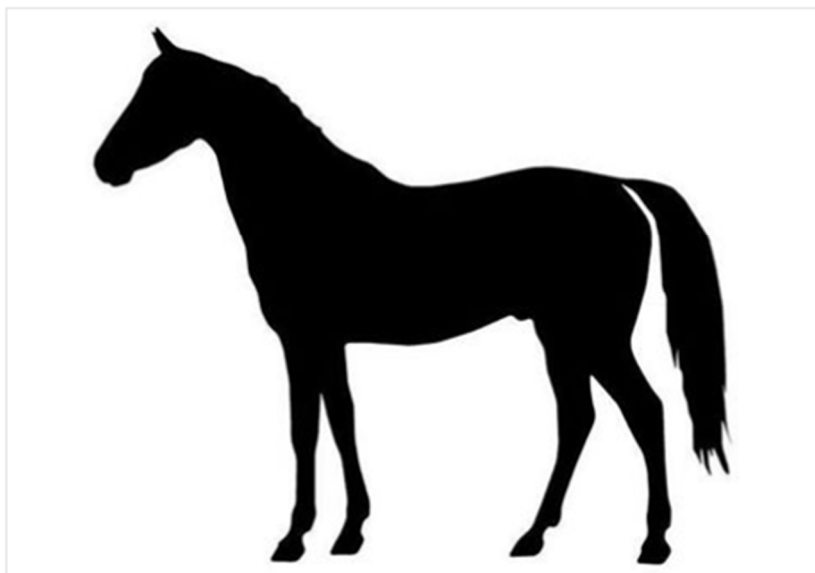
Bradford kittens 'coloured in' using permanent markers - BBC News

Two kittens are "coloured in" in what an animal charity describes as a "dreadful act" of cruelty.

**Petz Mansion**

26 April 2016 · 🌐

We are delighted to introduce our new horse section to our online store. Just visit www.petz mansion.com to find all the latest horse related accessories in one place.



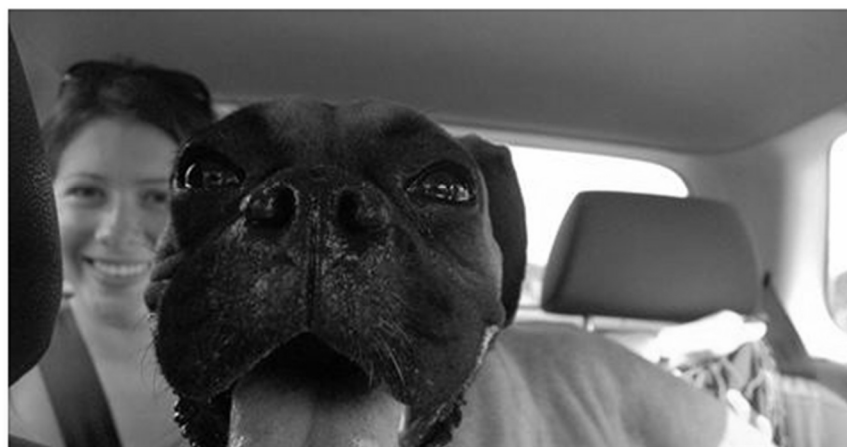
👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

**Petz Mansion**

26 April 2016 · 🌐

Your pets can give you worms, which if left untreated can potentially lead to surgery or even be fatal! Check out our latest de-worming products now at www.petz mansion.com

<http://www.petful.com/pet-h.../can-humans-get-worms-from-dogs/>

**Can Humans Get Worms From Dogs? - Petful**

Yes, you can contract roundworms, hookworms, or tapeworms from a dog or cat. Here's what you need to know.

PETFUL.COM



Petz Mansion

26 April 2016 · 🌐

What kind of pet owner wouldn't get their pet micro chipped?!

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/.../dog-micro-chipping-law-see-7656425>



Dog microchipping is the law from today - is your pooch registered?

More than 1 million of the UK's dogs are yet to be registered as it becomes a legal requirement - leaving pet owners facing fines of £580m

MIRROR.CO.UK | BY DAILY MIRROR

Appendix 3.3 – Types of Facebook User

Types of Facebook users

Below are 4 different types of Facebook users, please identify one that you most closely associate with.

Type 1

The main reason I use Facebook is to see what everyone is up to and to browse my feed. I find myself going on Facebook, often on my phone, because I'm bored and just want to see what people are up to. I very rarely posts status updates and only occasionally add comments to my friends or group posts.

Type 2

When using Facebook I like to post updates about what is happening with my day. I post pictures showing what I'm doing or something that interests me on a regular basis. When I go on Facebook it is rarely out of boredom but to update my friends on something interesting that has happened to me.

Type 3

I use Facebook mainly to connect with my friends, commenting on their posts or updates. I don't normally post updates of my own unless I have something important or very interesting to say. I tend to use Facebook in the evening and on weekends when other people are likely to be online in order to interact with them.

Type 4

I am an active user of Facebook, often creating statuses regarding what is going on in my life or how my mood is in general. I also comment on my friend's posts and like to offer any support I can. I spend a lot of time browsing Facebook as well as posting and commenting, it has become part of my normal daily routine.

Appendix 3.4 – Consent Form

CONSENT FORM for Interviews

First of all, I would like to thank you for consenting to be part of this study. Here, you can find some information about the study.

Purpose: This research aims to investigate consumer responses to the use of emotions on social media by organisations. I hope to gain insights and understanding of how emotions affect consumer perceptions of organisations, gaining a deeper understanding of how this affects social media users. After the research is completed, the findings are going to be used in my dissertation for the degree of MSc (Research) in Marketing in Birmingham Business School.

Procedures: If you decide to be part of this study, your participation will involve;

- consenting to an interview to be conducted face to face or via video software (e.g Skype)
- the interview taking a maximum of one hour (average 30 mins)
- focusing on your perceptions and reactions to organisational use of negative emotions
- the session being audio taped for future reference (unless you object to saving the conversations – in that case the researcher having notes from the conversation).

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in this study.

Confidentiality:

To protect your confidentiality, your name will not appear in any published material. You will be assigned a pseudonym (a fake name) that will be used instead of your name. The data about you will be kept private and only accessed by myself the primary researcher.

Rights:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate in the study.

- You have the right to change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time before April 16th 2016 without giving any reason and without any penalty by only sending a message to me. If you decide to do so, all relevant data will be deleted permanently without exception. After this time data analysis will have taken place making it difficult to remove the data from the study.
- Any new information that might make you change your mind about being in the study will be provided to you.
- If you are interested with the results of this study, you can ask for summary of the findings.

Questions:

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact with me by email to mjd585@students.bham.ac.uk

Consent:

Have you read the information on this message and do you agree to participate?
(YES or NO?)

Signature:

*This research is conducted by the supervision of Dr Doga Istanbuluoglu ,
Birmingham Business School, University House Birmingham, B15 2TT, Tel: +44 (0)
121 414 8592*

CONSENT FORM for Direct Quotation

Facebook message:

First of all, I would like to thank you for accepting to be part of this study. Here, you can find some information about the study.

Purpose: This research aims to investigate consumer responses to the use of emotions on social media by organisations. I hope to gain insights and understanding of how emotions affect consumer perceptions of organisations, gaining a deeper understanding of how this affects social media users. After the research is completed, the findings are going to be used in my dissertation for the degree of MSc (Research) in Marketing in Birmingham Business School.

Procedures: If you decide to be give permission to use a direct quote, this means researcher is going to use only your exact words without any other personal information. A pseudonym (fake name) will be used instead of your name.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks of discomforts in this study.

Confidentiality:

To protect your confidentiality, your name will not appear in any published material. You will be assigned a pseudonym (fake name) that will be used instead of your name.

However, it is possible for somebody to take a quotation from the research and use a search engine (e.g. Google, Bing) to find the actual page online. A motivated person could therefore break the pseudonym disguise assigned in the research and trace the original posting. Even though, this is very unlikely, if you do not want to be traced back to your initial post at any time, it is advised not to consent to this form.

The data about you will be kept private and only accessed by myself the primary researcher.

Rights:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate in the study.
- You have the right to change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time before April 16th 2016 without giving any reason and without any penalty by only sending a message to me. If you decide to do so, all relevant data will be deleted permanently without exception. After this time data analysis will have taken place making it difficult to remove the data from the study.
- Any new information that might make you change your mind about being in the study will be provided to you.
- If you are interested with the results of this study, you can ask for summary of the findings.

Questions:

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact with me though email to mjd585@students.bham.ac.uk

Consent:

Have you read the information on this message and do you agree to participate?
(YES or NO)

Signature

*This research is conducted by the supervision of Dr Doga Istanbuluoglu ,
Birmingham Business School, University House Birmingham, B15 2TT, Tel: +44 (0)
121 414 8592*

The day of the interview:

Hello X,

I just want to remind you that we set the date for a interview today at XX and also to tell you that I'm looking forward to meeting you. :)

Best

Here is the official consent form for the study. It is a bit long but it contains all the information you might want to know about this interview and my study:

Appendix 3.5 – Example Interview Transcript

Nigel Gumball

MD: ok I've just showed you 4 different types of Facebook user, which one do you think you are?

NG: type 1

MD: type 1 whys that?

NG: um because I believe that what I most closely align with

MD: ok so how often do you use Facebook?

NG: um rarely, I would say a couple of times a week

MD: and why do you use it?

NG: mostly to see what my friends are up to, to keep track of things and see what's going on. To see if there's anything exciting happening, whether there's any new or interesting content that is being shared.

MD: ok so do you follow any companies on Facebook?

NG: ummm no I don't think so.

MD: ok if you would like to have a look at this page, I'll just ask you some questions about what you saw.

NG: this is a very professionally produced webpage, I imagine the person that produced it was probably extremely skilled at developing websites (sarcastic) ok, I've read this website

MD: ok so what's your opinion of the company after viewing this page?

NG: um I think it's extremely generic content that's shared by a lot of similar pages. I don't think it's extremely professional as it looks like a fairly homemade icon which I can only assume a professional graphics designer was not consulted on. There's no cover picture, there's very little information and as far as I can tell there's zero likes on this page or very few likes so it's not very popular. It doesn't give me a great detail about what the website is, there's a couple of bits and bobs but most of it is sharing other people's work. It's very generic, I would not like it. Also I don't have a pet so it's not really my target page.

MD: ok, so what about the posts specifically?

NG: what do you want me to say about the posts?

MD: just what you think of it?

NG: uhh I think sharing quotes is something I don't agree with, I think it's boring um and extremely patronising. Um no I do think it is its just someone trying to tell you that their better or more intelligent than you by giving a quote that probably never existed. Sharing other people's content again, you know 10% of your latest order if I was going to order off this site brilliant but it's not my target page but if it was that would be useful. Then um ya know some slight personalisation which again this just looks like someone's dog you saw on the street. I don't know is there any more specific question about what I think about the 5 posts on this page.

MD: so if one of your friends posted on this link and it came up, say the competition, what would you do?

NG: I think a huge amount of that is defined by the picture it comes up with, so whatever this picture is if it captures my attention. Say someone else likes it, I'm scrolling through minding my own business if I see a really interesting picture that might grab my attention and I might be interested in reading it. If it was a generic picture or something that wasn't very interestingly worded and doesn't grab my attention quickly I don't think, I'd be interested in reading further into it.

MD: ok if you want to have a look at the bottom one, if you saw that would you do anything.

NG: yeah I like the lower one better because its short and to the point, it's got a picture that grabs your attention uh its really simple to understand what the call to action is here and if I'm interested in you know, pictures of dogs and dog's names then that is the link I'm going to be clicking.

MD: ok so how does this page make you feel?

NG: um you know it's a business's page, like really mostly disinterested to be honest. Like there's little content, it's not really for me. I don't really know why I'd be on this page.

MD: ok if you want to have a look at the next page.

NG: ok.....(sniggers).....ok... yeah sure.

MD: ok so what's your opinion of this page?

NG: so I mean right away the key thing that grabs me is that its asking me questions, it's trying to get my opinion on things which is naturally making me interested in reading what the article is about so there's one article about someone colouring in

kittens umm and it's kind of saying you know, its grabbing my attention and it's got quite a shocking headline. There's a picture that really demonstrates it quite quickly and there's a very developed response from the page with a very clear position being taken which is interesting and would draw me into reading the article. Ok I'd generally say it's a more engaging piece of work.

MD: so say you saw this kittens posts on Facebook would you interact at all?

NG: um yeah I'd probably click it just because out of morbid curiosity more than anything else.

MD: so this page uses negative emotions, the kitten one using anger, then there's the worm one using fear about worms and guilt about not getting your pet microchipped. So how do you feel about a company using these negative emotions?

NG: um I think to be honest its more interesting, I'm not, you know, particularly bothered by any of these articles but its more interesting that they are trying to engage with me more by trying to make me feel something rather than just putting bits of information out there that you can't engage with. I would be more likely to click on this page because it has used emotions to engage me.

MD: ok, so you say it makes you engage but does that have a positive or negative effect on you?

NG: um I think that is entirely dependent on the content of the posts and the emotion they are portraying. For example, the kittens one they have taken a very sensible position of you know, this is disgraceful and that's something I can agree with. If they were saying that's not so bad that would have a much more negative opinion of the company.

MD: ok so looking at these two pages which one do you prefer?

NG: I prefer the second one, the more emotional one.

MD: why's that?

NG: I just told you because it engages me more uh I think its reaching out to me, it's making me try to think about something. It's trying to put a certain point of view that might be considered interesting to me whereas the other is just putting information out there and not really engaging with me in any way. This feels more personal, this emotional page.

MD: Ok, so say you had a pet and this store was your local store, one you went to all the time, would being a customer and a regular shopper there make any difference to your opinion of the social media page?

NG: ummm yeah I think a social media presence is a useful addition to a brand but I don't think it's the be all and end all of a brand. So if I'd used this brand before and liked the product and they also had a really strong social media presence that was engaging and thoughtful I think that would be even more of a good point rather than say they had a really good social media presence but their brand was not very good or very reliable then I wouldn't feel so positive about it. But it definitely is a very useful spoke to have on the hub.

MD: and what's the most important thing about the social media presence to you?

NG: I think it's got to be regularly updated, it's got to be informative but it's also got to be interesting. So if you click on this page and I see out of date information or someone's not updated it for a couple of months then you kind of think ok why is

someone not monitoring this page. Has it gone out of business? Are they not interested in engaging with their customer? All sorts of things.

MD: ok, have you ever encountered in real life companies using negative emotions on social media?

NG: yeah all the time, people are always sharing articles with very leading titles about how you should feel about an issue. Umm you know like it or not that gets you to engage with the article in some manner that perhaps you wouldn't if it was just information.

MD: ok, I just want to go back to you saying you prefer it because it makes you think about it more umm but does the fact it's trying to make you angry, does that make you angry? Does that...

NG: I think it can perhaps be construed as a slightly cheap way of getting attention by just saying look at this outrageous thing that's happened but then you kind of think well I almost want to just have a look because it could be something really interesting and a lot of the time it generally isn't. Regardless it does get you to initially engage and you can make a judgement about it just being silly and too much of it, going too far one way can be a negative thing. So if you know this was pages and pages of rant about articles that were you know not really all that bad and all that stuff it can make you think well who's really running this page and what's the driver behind this because this isn't providing me with interesting information. It's not getting me to engage in a positive manner.

MD: ok, so charities often use this sort of technique, trying to get us to feel angry. Do you think its ethical for companies to use these techniques or should just charities use it?

NG: I don't really mind, at the end of the day it's up to the consumer. The company can present you with a version of the facts but they can't change them unless they are actively lying about something they still can't change the way it would be unless they are lying that's different. There's no reason for profit companies can't use emotionally engaging tactics to get you to interact with their brand.

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